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WHITE AND BLACK:

A STORY OF THE SOUTHERN STATES.

"I will a round unvarnished tale deliver."—SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
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NEW-STREET SQUARE

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WHITE AND BLACK.

CHAPTER I.

When Chauncey galloped away from West Creek he had no definite intention of going either to Madison or any other destination. The groom had been leading his impatient horse up and down the avenue when he met him, and he had taken the bridle, mounted, and ridden off at full speed, as if trying to escape from himself and his conscience. But this he could not do; the words of Constance's letter, "I know you would never forget me," were still before him, and torturing him with reproach. How could he answer her now? How could he ever again meet that sweet fond look, with its truthful glance, that trusted even while it questioned him? He had the letter in his

hand, and he must answer it at once; but how? Could he tell her that she had judged him rightly—that he had been true to her—and place that falsehood between them for ever? The thought of her ever learning or suspecting his faithlessness was too horrible to think of. Yes, it must be hidden from her—hidden for ever; but how was that to be assured? If he sent Irene away, Constance would still learn from Philadelphia of her having been at West Creek, and would anxiously insist on knowing where she was; and if he sent her to the North, still Constance would, sooner or later, hear the truth; and was it not more honest to be at once his own accuser, instead of letting others tell the tale for him? But what a confession! No, he never could let *her* hear it; she who believed him to be all that was worthy and true. How he hated himself, and how she would hate him! Had it been any other but Irene! but Constance loved her as a sister; yes, she had called her "sister," and spoken of her as such to him. Irene had naturally believed him to be her truest friend, and he had pledged himself to procure her

liberty, and protect her from all danger. Yes, he had promised that, and was Constance to hear all this, and how he had fulfilled his promise? Could she ever pardon him, or was this to be the cause of his losing her love for ever? Could she forgive ——?

As he thought of the grief and horror Constance would feel, his own conduct began to assume still darker colours to him. If she owed love and affection to Irene, so did he for her sake; her kindness to Constance merited gratitude from him, and of all men, he should have been bound to respect the defenceless girl thus placed in his power. He cursed himself again and again; he would have given almost life itself to recall the past week. But there was now no time to mend matters; no time to release Irene; he must act at once, and communicate with Constance by letter or word, concealing or confessing his temporary faithlessness to her. This confession, terrible as it was, was his only resource; he could not keep that secret in his heart while she thanked him and loved him for his supposed constancy, and, indeed, there was no safety

in concealing it. Whether Irene was sold or freed, it would be known at last; it was better to risk all, and avowing the whole, to throw himself on Constance's mercy. Others would exaggerate his guilt, while he could, perhaps, soften her anger and plead his own temptations.

But what temptations had he had but Irene's helplessness? She had been thrown utterly, and without appeal, into his power. He was her natural friend and protector, and yet he had forgotten her claims on his chivalry, and remembered only that she was a slave and his own property. He had acted towards her as Ellsland might have done, with this difference, that *he* would not have sworn to protect and defend the poor child, and so have added, as Irene had said, perjury to his wickedness and cruelty. She had, indeed, a sacred claim on his manliness and kindness; it was to her, even, that he owed ever having met Constance at Chestnut Brook, and she was her adopted sister; he remembered too how thoroughly Irene had confided in him, never dreaming of danger from him, and refusing to believe her own ears when he first told her of his

passion. Poor child! she had thought of him almost as a brother, and her look of bewildered terror and consternation, when she first found her mistake, came back to him now as the keenest reproach and condemnation.

He could hardly understand the past; he who had felt so confident in his own strength, so firm against any temptation, who prided himself on being a just and humane master to his very slaves, and a fair and chivalrous foe even to his enemies; after constituting himself guardian of this unprotected girl, and receiving the blessings and thanks of her friends for so doing, to have outraged her with such atrocious offers! His faithlessness to Constance was but the smallest part of his treachery; but how *could* he have done this? Five years ago he felt he would have been incapable of it. True, he had hardly then met the temptations of life, much less those of Southern life; but when he contrasted his tender, romantic love for Helen with his brutal passion for Irene, he felt he was now an altered man. He had feared this before; he knew he was more indifferent to the

sufferings of his negroes than once; and he remembered with shame the savage order he had sent to his overseer before he left. There was, indeed, a change in him, and unwillingly he recognised that his Southern life, or, at least, slaveholding, was exercising, as his uncle said it invariably did, a fearfully deteriorating influence on him. He was once reluctant to punish a slave for a real fault; now he had, in a fit of anger, sentenced the poor old woman who had so long and faithfully served him to a torture which he could only trust Mr. Bland had too much humanity to inflict.

. . . . . .

Chauncey had plenty of time to make these reflections. Constance, controlled by her promise to Mrs. Bolton, had only given him the address of Mr. Saville, who she said would forward the letters to him, and as he believed her to be at the North, he was compelled to wait until that gentleman had answered his inquiries as to where Miss Annersly was. He remained at a roadside inn for the present, sending, however, home for the few necessaries he should require for a hasty journey northwards, and direct-

ing also Mr. Saville to write without delay; he would not return to West Creek before he found Constance. Whether he was to receive her forgiveness or not, he dared not think; find her he must, and confessing all to her, await his sentence. Could she allow for his weakness? Ah! she knew him better than he did himself when she hesitated to place her happiness in the hands of a man who exercised this dangerous irresponsible power over others.

Chauncey had an indistinct prescience where this train of reasoning was leading him, but he could not leave it, nevertheless; he felt that to shrink from the examination of any of the consequences of slaveholding was unworthy of him. He continued this mental inquisition, moreover, as he journeyed to Virginia, after receiving Mr. Saville's letter, and hearing that he would find Constance at Oaklands. He had not written to her as she had asked him to do, though he sent to Saville, for he had that to tell which must not be trusted to a mere letter; he must be there to plead his own defence while he accused himself. Yet as he grew more convinced

of the evil influence that slave-holding had exercised over him during the past five years, he began to hope that she would also recognise the temptations that had surrounded him, and be inclined to mercy from her very detestation of the system which had laid the snare for him.

As he pursued his journey he was more alive to the cruelties of the slave system than he had ever been before ; at one roadside inn he heard the complaints of a negro woman who was being cruelly beaten, and he was sufficiently distressed to attempt an intercession for her, when he found she was being punished for laziness, as her mistress averred, in not preparing the traveller's supper. A Northern man would hardly have found an appetite for the repast in question when it came, and even Chauncey gave one thought to the poor slave who had been whipped to ensure its punctual appearance.

In this mood of mind he accidentally came across a slave auction, and though he fully recognised that this was a necessary part of the great institution, the sight affected him more than he wished. He had

attended such scenes occasionally before, and seen men sold like horses or furniture, but he had then been intent upon his own affairs, and the particular negro he wanted and was waiting for; but now, without having this object in view, and with his feelings powerfully excited by his own late reflections, he experienced a new sensation at the sight. There were a number of women standing near the auctioneer waiting their turn, and Chauncey, in his present frame of mind, having no desire to see them sold, was leaving the place, when a young man of striking appearance mounted the auction block, and stood awaiting a purchaser. He was small, and delicately moulded, but when he was stripped for inspection, his neatly turned limbs and well-formed shoulders promised more strength than his bulk would have augured, and the auctioneer was not contradicted when he observed there was as much work in him as in a heavier built *creatur*. His complexion was dark, but his high-cut and aristocratic features showed that white blood was strong in his veins, and his upright carriage and bold aspect had almost the dignity of a

free man. He had been a gentleman's servant, the auctioneer said, and was sold, *not for any fault*, but in consequence of the death of his owner.

"Well, boy, what's your name? Wallace, eh? Well, Wallace, do you think you could do plantation work?" said a gentleman, calling the man off the block to him. The slave looked scrutinisingly at his interlocutor, and evidently liking his face, answered briskly,—

"Yes, sir, I think I could, though I like to look after horses best."

"Ah, but I've got a boy for that already; perhaps I can put you to it next season. Now I want you for fieldwork."

"I daresay I can do it, sir. I always give satisfaction, I believe. I've never been whipped once," replied Wallace, proudly, "and I mean never to deserve it."

"Very good, then I hope you'll do," answered the gentleman; "I'll bid for you," and the man remounted the auction block.

There were several bids, and he sold for a high price, though some of the bystanders shook their heads, and said, "the nigger was too uppish for a field hand, and needed

a breaking in." His new master, however, declared himself satisfied with his purchase, and told Wallace to carry his portmanteau to the railway for him.

As the crowd broke up, the purchasers came to take away their new acquisitions, and even the dull and brutal faces Chauncey had pronounced incapable of exhibiting the emotions of humanity, were now piteous with grief and despair, as the men bade farewell for ever to the wives and sisters they had loved to the best of their poor natures. Their suffering was not less crushing because they had no moral strength to bear it, or language to express it; but when it was shown in shrieks and sobs, it met with neither pity nor attention, until the agonised parting of a woman from her husband attracted the observation even of the slave-drivers. The man had stood in unmoved silence to see her sold; only his flashing eyes and clenched hands betraying what he felt as he heard the bids, and turned his burning gaze from one to another of the purchasers who offered to take his wife from him; the agony of the woman was no less silent and controlled, but there

was madness in her eyes and blanched cheeks, and fingers nervously trembling as she stood on the auction block. When she was sold she sat down quietly, without showing any further signs of agitation; but as her owner came to take her away, she burst from him and flung her arms round her husband's neck with one loud shriek which echoed through all the crowd. The auctioneer took her from her husband's arms, and as he found she had fainted, she was carried away.

Chauncey threaded his way through the crowd and reached the open road, where a new spectacle presented itself. A negro man, from want of muscle and inaptitude to conceal a slight deformity, had been declared unsound, and no bids were offered for him. He was, therefore, bought in by a friend of his owner, and was now undergoing punishment for his awkwardness, as it was considered, or sulkiness, in not showing himself off to advantage.

Chauncey went home to his hotel in a sad mood, and the recollection of these scenes haunted him even among his own hopes and fears, as he came nearer to the

place where Constance was. His letter to Mr. Saville had not met with an immediate answer, and it was more than a fortnight after Constance's letter had reached West Creek, before Chauncey came in sight of the tall poplars which surrounded Oaklands, and were visible to the traveller for many miles.

Chauncey learnt before he entered the gate that Mrs. Bolton was seriously ill, and that a clergyman was already with her. Nevertheless, he sent in his card to Miss Annersly, and went to wait in the drawing-room, where Mr. Saville was earnestly engaged talking to another gentleman.

They ceased speaking as Chauncey entered, and the lawyer, feeling it in some degree incumbent on him to do the honours of the house, informed the stranger that his client's death was hourly expected; but that he, being the legal adviser, would be the person to whom all questions upon business should be referred. Mr. Saville was disposed for conversation, but as Chauncey did not respond to his invitation, he continued to write for a few moments, and then, turning to his companion, con-

tinued the discussion that Chauncey's entrance had interrupted.

"Oh! the manumission is secure enough, the old lady has spared no effort to assure the freedom of the niggers; but it's an awful waste of property, and I pity the heir from my soul."

"You don't think he can recover the niggers under the Poindexter decision, do you, then?" said the other gentleman. "I should advise him to try."

"I am glad you are not his legal adviser, James," replied Mr. Saville, laughing confidentially. "He may try, but I don't think it would be any good. Mrs. Bolton, or rather Miss Annersly, for it was all her doing, first to last, was up to that, and not content with my saying the will was good, must needs refer it to one of the judges for his opinion, and it is so worded as not to be really affected by the Poindexter case at all, as I can see."

"That's a pity, then," answered the second lawyer. "I saw Miss Annersly, I think, the other day—good-looking, certainly; but she seems to have a most determined will. It's a pity she ever met the

poor old lady, to put this nonsense into her head."

"Well, James, now I've a word of advice for you. I only speak as your brother and your elder, you know. Don't give up your profession. I daresay you're sick of it, but it would be a pity to throw away all you have done now."

"It's very well for you, who have such a windfall as Heyward Bolton to look to, but I'm disgusted with it all," replied James Saville. "No, I've had enough of the law, and I'm off to Kansas. There's something for a gentleman to do there, and I've made my mind up."

"Well, I wouldn't go if I were you," said his brother; "anyhow, take care of yourself, and don't get a Free-soil bullet through you if you can help it. Who on earth is that?" he added, in a lower voice, glancing at Chauncey, who was walking restlessly up and down the room, apparently quite unconscious of their presence.

"I don't know; he looks fixed, anyhow," replied Mr. James; "but here's some one coming, and it must be your Miss Annersly," he continued, as Constance entered the room

and Chauncey turned to her. There were traces of tears on her cheeks, but a radiant joy shone in her eyes as she met him, though, mindful of the presence of Mr. Saville, she said, in a voice almost calm,—

"I knew you would come as soon as you could do so, but when did you receive my letter?"

Chauncey could only press her hands in his, and wish Mr. Saville in the next world for his untimely presence; but a servant entered and said in a low voice, as if subdued by some deep feeling of awe or reverence,—

"Missis will be glad to see Mr. Burgoyne, please, Miss Annersly; and you, too, sir," to Mr. Saville; and Constance took Chauncey upstairs, only finding time to say, "She is dying; she has been almost a mother to me since I left you," and they stood in the chamber of the dying lady.

It was crowded with a number of slaves, of all ages and shades of colour, who stood sadly watching the fleeting moments of their mistress's life, thinking that after she was gone they would be transferred, with her house and furniture, to the hard rule of her

heir and his still more dreaded bailiff. Here was a sufficient motive for weeping, but yet many of them shed tears for her sake alone, for she had been a kind mistress, and they were grateful for the consideration she had often shown them. Two physicians and an Episcopalian clergyman stood by the bedside, and an old mulatto woman, the foster-sister of Captain Bolton, supported her mistress's head on her arm as she leaned back exhausted with suffering on her pillow. She raised herself, however, and a look of strange animation crossed her countenance as her eye lighted on Chauncey, and she said, as she took Constance's hand,

"Is it he, my dear? let me speak to him."

Chauncey came nearer and stood by the bed, waiting in respectful silence for her to speak, which she did in a voice audible to him and Constance alone.

"Mr. Burgoyne, I am glad you have come. I would willingly have seen her joined to one I dearly loved, but your memory was too powerful with her. God bless her, and make you both happy! And now, Constance dear, speak to them and tell

them what I have done for them," she added in a faint voice; and Constance, turning to the slaves present, said very slowly and distinctly,

"Your mistress you know already is dying, and she does not wish to leave you all to a hard and cruel master. You have been good and faithful servants, and she will reward you for that now; she has made you all free by her will, as well as all the others who are on the plantation, and your children too, and she trusts . . ."

Her voice was drowned amid the bursts of thanksgiving and sobs of joy from the slaves as they simultaneously fell on their knees and prayed heaven to reward their mistress in the next world for her kindness to them. One or two, feeling themselves privileged by long service, approached the bed, and kneeling took the hand of the dying lady, and kissed it, and then at a signal from Miss Annersly they left the room to carry the joyful tidings of their promised freedom to their fellow-slaves in the field.*

* These unfortunate creatures never obtained the freedom promised them. Mr. James Saville had suggested that the will might be annulled by the decision

Mrs. Bolton signed to the clergyman to come to her, but her strength was exhausted,

of the Poindexter case, and the sequence proved he was right. By the decision to which he referred, the manumission of negroes in the State of Virginia was rendered much more difficult. Mr. Poindexter directed in his will that the negroes should have the choice of freedom or being sold by auction, and supposed that their liberty by this was secured. Their freedom, however, was disputed on the ground that the slaves were not actually manumitted, but that their freedom depended on their own choice, and slaves "cannot legally have the power of choice," as this would involve the exercise of civil and legal rights and legal capacity; and "as slaves have no civil or social rights, or legal capacity, to make or agree to contracts, they cannot exercise the power of choice with regard to manumission." They were to remain slaves unless they *chose* to be free, and, while slaves, they could not legally make any choice on the subject, and they therefore remained slaves despite the evident intentions of their former owner.

To guard against a similar construction, Mrs. Bolton's will was carefully worded so as to avoid the knotty question, and her slaves were directed to be freed on a certain day, and funds raised from her estate to be employed to remove them to any Free State where they desired to go; but in order to allow them the privilege of remaining in Virginia, if any desired it (a privilege which the laws refuse to freed negroes, under pain of re-enslavement), she provided

and she sank back into the arms of her favourite servant, and listened with closed

that, if any preferred to remain, they should be permitted to choose their own masters among her relatives.

When this will was first examined, it was decided that the negroes were freed by it, unless they declined their liberty; but the appeal being made by the heirs, the judges who had decided the case of Mr. Poindexter's will now ruled that the same objection applied to this. An English lawyer would have been puzzled to see the similarity of the two cases, but they ruled that the negroes, having no legal power to make the choice proposed, remained slaves.

These decisions, which reversed the judgment of former courts, who had in similar cases given the negroes the benefit of the doubt and allowed them to be free, virtually annulled many other wills already drawn in Virginia, and were hailed by the slaveholding party as the most important decisions that had occurred on the subject of slavery since the time of Lord Mansfield (of English memory). Lord Mansfield's decision that no slave could exist on English ground, was given, it may be remembered, in 1772, four years before the Declaration of Independence was signed in America.

The lawyer who drew up Mrs. Bolton's will appeared as counsel for the heirs in overthrowing his own work. Truly the people of Virginia are, as one of their leading journals said on this occasion, "fully and thoroughly in favour of the institution of slavery."

eyes to the prayers which he commenced reading for her.

That same night she died quietly and peacefully without a struggle.

It was fortunate for Chauncey and Constance that their interview took place while the feelings of both were strongly impressed with the scene they had just witnessed; the knowledge that death was so near to them stilled their own emotions with a reverential awe. It was a long and painful conversation. On first hearing of Mr. Morton's cruelty and the change in Irene's fortunes, Constance's distress was so great that it was some time before Chauncey could proceed to his own share in the history.

Constance turned deadly pale and grasped the arm of the chair in which she sat, almost convulsively; she said nothing except once. "Chauncey, are you telling me the whole truth now?" and then she turned away from him and remained silent. . .

. . . . . .

"Constance, dear Constance, you cannot think as badly of me as I think of myself. Do not give me up yet."

"I never could have imagined this,"

answered Constance, burying her face in her hands.

It was a relief to them both that she was called away to direct the preparations for the funeral, and she did not return to him for some hours. She did not blame him, she saw he was too unhappy to need that, but he read his condemnation in her sorrowful look and quivering lips ; perhaps the horrors of slavery had never struck her so forcibly as at that moment. She was not hard-hearted; she showed more pity for him than he had for himself, but she did not deceive him,—he saw how he had sunk in her estimation, and that the past, though it might be forgiven, could not be forgotten, and then her thoughts went to her poor friend ; she was not thinking of her own injury alone, her heart burned to rescue and console her, and if she forgave Chauncey, it was as much to secure Irene's freedom and provide for her instant rescue. She exacted a promise that he would return immediately to West Creek and send Irene instantly to the North under the careful escort of Stephen Bland and his wife. Chauncey promised, and left Oaklands on this errand the very next morning.

When he was gone, Constance gave vent to her feelings; horror, grief, and indignation almost overpowered her, and her heart was nearly broken. She had sent him to secure Irene's liberty, and had insisted on his going for that purpose, before she would even think whether she could forgive or not; but what was to be the end of this? Her conscience, her sense of duty, her principles, told her she ought never to return to Chestnut Brook again; but her love for Chauncey was too strong; she could not part from him now, fallen as he was. She had cast in her lot with him for better or worse. He was no longer what she had fondly imagined him to be. He too was contaminated by the foul atmosphere that surrounded him; but she could not leave him to struggle alone against the temptations which she saw were necessary consequences of his position. She ought to aid him in redeeming the past. No; she must return to Chestnut Brook again, and pardon Chauncey. She would do so; but life seemed changed to her, and her love could no longer be joy only, as it had once been.

Chauncey would have hated himself even

more than he did, had he known the intensity of the distress in which he left Constance when he returned home to send Irene to the North. He hastened to West Creek, and found, to his amazement, that Irene had gone to his father's plantation, and was now absent with Mrs. Burgoyne. There was nothing for him to do but to go to the Creek, and to wait until his mother returned. Meanwhile he consulted with his overseer upon the best means of sending Irene to the North, which he told Mr. Bland, in confidence, must be done with the utmost secrecy. To his astonishment, his mother returned, unaccompanied by Irene. He waited a day or two, supposing that Mrs. Burgoyne had left her to come on with the luggage, while she had hurried on to Eleanor; but as no Irene appeared, he took the first opportunity of finding his mother alone to ask her where she had left her.

"She is quite safe now," replied Mrs. Burgoyne, in a tone which sent the blood to her son's face. "Oh, Chauncey! Chauncey! I little thought Constance's friend would not have been safe at West Creek.

I little thought I should have had to protect her."

Chauncey made no answer — he could not — he only sought to learn where Irene was, and hearing that she was in good hands, and on her way to the Free States, he returned to Virginia.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Burgoyne had left Irene in the little wagon, preparing to start for the free territory of Kansas. As long as her kind friend was near her, she felt her courage good; but when she lost sight of her as the noisy party in the tavern filled up the doorway, her terror returned at the prospect of her long and uncertain journey. The night was dark, and seemed even blacker in contrast with the glow of light from the large fire in the tavern; and as she looked fearfully round into the gloom, a distant, long, plaintive howl came out of the darkness, and sent a shudder through her as she recognised the often-described cry of the prairie wolves. One of the horses in the wagon started at the sound, his harness rattled, and Irene trembled as if an enemy were close at hand.

"Well, are you ready, Madam?" said a

rough but friendly voice, at the side of the cart. "We've a long drive before us."

"Going to start now, eh?" said one of the men in the bar, speaking through the broken window.

"Yes, I'm off, for I like company, and those before me won't wait for any man;" and clambering into the cart with another person who took the reins, he of the voice sat down on the floor of the vehicle and commenced smoking, while the horses set off at a steady trot, as if aware that a long journey was before them.

"There'll be a moon soon," observed the farmer, and Irene waited anxiously for that light to come, that she might distinguish the faces of her fellow-travellers. They soon came within sound of another vehicle, in which occasional loud laughs and snatches of song betokened a merry and half-drunken company. As the wind rose higher, the clouds drifted faster, and at last a chasm in their dark folds let the starlight down into the prairie, and she was able to see her companions, who on their part had both turned round to look at her. The driver was a negro, the other a white man, evi-

dently his master, and there was something in the cordial tone with which he spoke to his servant, which cheered Irene, and made her hope he was a kind-hearted slaveholder, for slaveholder he evidently was. He asked her several questions about her journey, which she answered as well as she could; but he soon lay back on his buffalo skin, and smoked and dozed in silence. Irene could not close her eyes for a moment; the fearful anxiety she had been suffering for many days, the uncertainty of her route, and the strangeness of her new situation, left her far too excited to lose consciousness for an instant. She strained her eyes into the darkness, becoming more terrified whenever the clouds deepened the gloom around her; she started when the peals of discordant laughter sounded from the invisible cart in front of them, and shivered with fear as the long howl again showed the wolves to be in their vicinity.

"You needn't be afraid of them," said the master of the wagon, rousing himself, as the howl was again heard, and seeing her fear, "I'll get you safe on your journey. Did you say you were making for Lawrence?"

Irene, knowing that she must appear to have a definite termination of her journey, immediately answered that she was going to the town he named.

"I shan't be able to see you there myself, then," he replied; "but I'll take you where you'll soon find some one as will. It's the first time, I calculate, you've ever travelled without a friend?"

Irene pleaded the illness of a friend in Lawrence, and he answered,

"Well, if you were not going out of this State, I would have lent you a nigger woman to go with you; but I shouldn't get her again out of Lawrence, I s'pose."

"You are very kind," answered Irene, gratefully; "have you many servants?"

"Ten or twelve, I calculate; yes, wish I hadn't, I do. I wish there was a law to make all the niggers free; for I'm sick of having to look after them, they'll do nothing without whipping and cursing, and they're such a wretched, lying lot that I'm ashamed to let my children grow up amongst them. Well, I don't care who knows it, I wish the niggers was free, and I've often said so."

"But is there no danger in saying that?" asked Irene, in surprise, whilst her heart beat very fast as she wondered whether he was a safe confidant.

"Well, I don't care if there is danger; I won't say what I don't think to please any man, and if they should come to settle me, there'd be daylight through some of them too, I calculate. No; I've had niggers all my life, and I say it's a plaguy business."

He relapsed into silence, and beyond a few observations to the negro, said no more until morning dawned on the prairie. As the sun rose, the little wagon halted; the negro kindled a fire and waited on his master and Irene as they ate a traveller's breakfast, and after an hour's delay they set out again. A long distance had been accomplished by the evening, when the Missourian stopped the horses before the door of a low shanty, built of roughly squared logs, on the border of a little rivulet. Several carts and light wagons were drawn up under an open shed, on the other side of the road, and two or three dogs lay near them, eyeing each other with looks of suspicion that showed them to be

the guardians of their respective masters' property.

"Now, look you, I shall leave you here," said Irene's conductor. "I'm going a piece further on myself; but it's to a place where you wouldn't be comfortable, may be. Here you can sleep quiet, the missis is kind and thoughtful, she will look after you, and I will ask them to let you go with some one as will take care of you to Lawrence. Some one will be coming by to-morrow or the next day."

He went into the house, followed by Irene, and she heard him tell the woman who came to meet them that he wanted to leave the young lady with her, as hers was a quiet respectable house, if she could find an escort for her to Kansas, where she had friends waiting for her.

"She can stay with us, I suppose," said the mistress of the cabin; "but there's a man going on to-morrow towards the border, if that will help her; but he's one of the free-soil folks, I think.

"Who is he?" asked the Missourian, and after a few minutes' conversation with the hostess, he turned, and beckoning Irene aside, said,

"This man is going on into the territory. He's a free-soiler, but he's a man I know something of; his name's Foster, and he owns a farm out there. He'll take you comfortable a piece, and find you some one to take you on to Lawrence quick."

The idea of her new conductor being one of the free-soilers had not roused any fears in Irene, as the Missourian seemed to expect it would; aud she congratulated herself on finding so good an escort, while he assured her that, though he was one of the rebels, Foster was a quiet, sober man, and she need have no fears of travelling under his guidance.

She could not induce the kind-hearted Missourian to accept any payment for having brought her so far on her journey; he replied gallantly that it wasn't often that he had had so pleasant a companion to talk to in his wagon; and with a fatherly consideration for her inexperience, he informed her exactly how much she was to pay her hostess the next morning, and wishing her a good journey, he shook her hand heartily and retired.

The good woman of the house was hospitable, nay, even kind, to the young stranger. She had not the slightest suspicion that she was a coloured woman, and asked questions innumerable about her friends in Lawrence. Irene was glad to escape from her sympathy and curiosity by pleading excessive fatigue, and lay down to rest on a bed which stood in the one room, which was parlour and kitchen too. Worn out with her journey and anxiety she soon dropped into a slumber, and slept for some hours through all the clatter of knives and plates, the continuous fretting of a teething baby, and the loud snoring of the master of the house, whose bed was also in the little kitchen. Two hours before dawn her hostess wakened her, and told her she must make ready to start, for Mr. Foster was going. Irene hurried on her shawl, ate a few hasty mouthfuls of breakfast, paid for her entertainment, and took leave of her hostess. Mr. Foster, the Kansas farmer, was ready, and she was soon installed in his wagon, wrapped comfortably in blankets and cloaks, and leaning against a barrel of corn, while her new companion, mounting

beside her, took the reins, and she was once more on her way.

Her companion was a tall, brawny man, rough and rude in his exterior, but there was a kindly look in his eye, and something in his western accent which seemed a pledge of his friendly disposition to her, so that she felt herself already safer, and surer of her freedom, before they had gone ten miles on their road, and the long streak of light on the eastern edge of the prairie showed the dawn was come.

To attempt to realise, or even to imagine, the feelings of the fugitives who see freedom before them after escaping from the foul den of Southern slavery, must ever be an impossible task for him who has not gone through their soul-crushing agony and despair. Thank heaven! there are only four millions of men and women in Christendom who can understand or suffer this agony of agonies—to feel a human soul panting and aspiring in them, and to know themselves to be by law but things and chattels, in whom protest or assertion of human feeling is to be punished with the lash, in whom reason is a crime, and natural

affection an unrecognised attribute. When such as these, after the struggle and peril of life, gain the freedom so long desired and panted for, their joy is such as none who have not shared their sorrow can enter into.

The farmer asked many questions about Irene's destination, which she found a difficulty in answering, for she dreaded lest she might betray herself by her ignorance of Kansas; she could only say that she was going to Lawrence to meet some friends, and must wait there until they joined her.

"Then have you no friends to stay with now at Lawrence?" he asked, with some surprise and curiosity.

"No particular friends," replied Irene, carelessly. The farmer smiled as he glanced at her young and beautiful face, and said—

"And do you think you shall be safe, miss, to stop a long while in Lawrence, with no friends to take care on you?"

"Why," said the incautious and frightened Irene, "Lawrence is a free town, is it not?"

The man turned sharply round, and looked at her with a keen, scrutinising glance; her varying colour and evident

confusion aroused his suspicions, and he asked, —

"Eh? what? Are you going to friends in Lawrence, or do you only want to get to a free territory?"

Irene's heart almost stood still with terror; she saw she was discovered, and was about to confess the truth and throw herself on his mercy, when he continued, "Well, if so, you're not the first I've driven from the Slave States to Lawrence, or further still; and if you're a slave you may tell me, for I'm a Free-soil man, and I'll see you to a safe place."

"You will take me to the Free States, you will?" cried Irene, clasping her hands and looking up into his face imploringly.

"Yes, that I will," he replied, "that I will. I'll not let you lose your freedom now you've come so far for it;" and, expressing his sympathy for her in kind and hearty language, he wound up by saying, "And I guess I'll take you to a house where they won't think of coming after you, or they'd get the worst of it, maybe. You shall go to James Montgomery's cabin, and his wife, I'm certain, will be kind to you till you can

go on to Canada, for it's there you must go at last, I guess."

The Free-soil man kept his word, and conducted Irene to the house of one of the leaders of the Free-soilers, and here Irene felt herself at last secure from danger.

The Kansas Territory was at this time, November, 1858, the scene of bloody skirmishes and contests between the Free-soil men and the upholders of law and order, as the Southern party styled themselves. Since the colonisation of Kansas, the struggle between North and South had assumed a new form, and questions which had been left to the votes of legislatures and senators were brought to the fierce decision of the sword.

As the accession of any new state, with its resources and votes in Congress, gives increased power to either the Northern or Southern party, when the time came for the fertile plains west of the Missouri to be colonised, the South resolved to have a share of the territory, although, by old agreement and standing treaties, it had been given to the North as an equivalent for

Missouri. Having long since recognised that free labour and slave labour are almost incompatible, the North understands that any territory where the South introduces slavery is virtually lost to Northern emigrants and industry for ever. This being the case, regard for its own interests justified the North in desiring that the new territory west of Missouri should be made a free state. It was already so by treaty and by law, having been, like the old Missouri territory fifty years ago, secured by solemn pledges against the introduction of "involuntary servitude." When the Missouri compromise in 1820 gave over all the territory south of 36° 30′ to the slave power, the Nebraska and Kansas territories lying above that line consoled the North in some measure for its loss; but as years rolled on, and the tide of emigration advanced to those countries, the Southern party, increasing in power, would no longer be bound by the terms of the old treaty, and when measures were concerted for organising the Indian country into "Territories" (the preliminary step for creating a new state), the slaveholding party stepped

forward again to secure an advantage for itself.

As the new country was legally *free soil*, the question of slavery had no right to obtrude itself into the deliberation of Congress when the new territory was under consideration, yet the Southern members audaciously proposed that the "new territories of Kansas and Nebraska be given the *option* of entering the Union as Free or Slave States, as their citizens might hereafter decide." This infringement of the rights of the North was strenuously supported by the whole power of the South, and afterwards carried in one of the most lengthened debates Congress ever witnessed.

As soon as the Kansas bill was passed, May, 1854, leaving the fate of the future state to be determined by the votes of the first settlers, it became evident that a race would be run between the North and the South to secure the new country for freedom or slavery. Never, perhaps, has an emigration been better organised than that from the Northern states; clergymen and schoolmasters accompanied the settlers, and men of education and respectability were first

among the colonists,—and never, perhaps, has a new country been settled under more favourable circumstances. But the Southern patriots were not idle, and having but a scanty working population wherewith to people the debatable ground, they prepared to resist the "Free-soil invaders" with other measures. "I tell you," said one of the leading men of Missouri, "to mark every scoundrel who is in the least tainted with abolitionism or free-soilism and exterminate him. Neither give nor take quarter from the d——d rascals. To those who have qualms of conscience as to violating laws, state or national, I say, the time has come when such impositions must be disregarded, as your rights and property are in danger. I advise you, one and all, to enter every election district in Kansas in defiance of Reeder* and his myrmidons, and vote at the point of the bowie-knife and revolver. Neither take nor give quarter, as the cause demands it. It is enough that the slaveholding interest wills it, from which there is no appeal."

* The Governor of Kansas.

Notwithstanding these threats, and the constant annoyance from parties of Missourians on the watch for plunder, the Free-soilers continued to settle in the country; and when the inhabitants of the territory met to elect their delegate to Congress, the majority of the Free-soilers was so evident that seventeen hundred armed men from Missouri, marched over the border, voted as citizens of Kansas, and by these means carried a pro-slavery candidate. Four months later, in March, 1855, the same scene was repeated; the citizens of Kansas having met to elect their representatives, nearly five thousand Missourians appeared to control the polls, and elected a legislature, of which some members were even citizens of Missouri. The Free-soil settlers refused to recognise this legislature, or the pro-slavery laws it enacted, and subsequently elected another* to represent fairly the wishes of the citizens. A month later, the President of the United States, Mr. Pierce, denounced this second legislature as an illegal assembly, and sent Federal troops into the territory to en-

* Called the Topeka legislature.

force the laws of the first. Sympathisers and volunteers from the South had also come to aid the pro-slavery party; a band of Missourians, fifteen hundred strong, had marched to attack the city of Lawrence, and now, joining the Federal troops, committed, under the shelter of their name, many outrages on the Free-state settlers. The Free-soilers, not choosing to resist the Federal authority, though it was then under pro-slavery influence, offered no opposition, while under the plea of arresting a member of the legislature, the Federal troops marched to Lawrence, cannonaded the principal public buildings, and gave up the town to plunder.

After this time, the Free-state men, condemned as rebels by the Federal authority, and exposed to the continual invasion of the Southern champions of law and order, had to stand on the defensive, and protect their families and homes as they best might. There were many skirmishes between them and the Southern guerillas, and many cowardly murders of Free-state men were recorded, before twenty-one hundred mounted Missourians rode into the country again to plunder and de-

stroy wherever they could advance unmolested. This was in the summer of 1856. The Federal authorities, sympathising with the pro-slavery party, dispersed the Free-state legislature, and, to their eternal disgrace, the United States' troops remained quiet and indifferent spectators, while the Missourians sacked and burned a Free-state town, under circumstances of the most revolting brutality. The roads were, according to a Federal authority, "literally strewed with dead bodies;" the Free-soilers, condemned as rebels to the Union, were left to the mercy of the "Border ruffians," armed in many instances with muskets from the armouries of the United States. Nothing, however, could daunt their love of freedom, or their detestation of slavery, and they stood their ground. In that part of the country most removed from the proximity of the Missourians, the struggle gradually became one of political intrigue, in which the Free-soil cause triumphed; but fighting still continued in the southern portion of the territory, nor had it ceased at the time when Irene Morton sought a refuge among the Free-soilers in the winter of 1858.

Kindly treated, and promised assistance in going to the Free States or Canada, Irene felt she could safely wait a few weeks, and learn if Maxwell was still her friend or not. She wrote to Philadelphia, and she also sent word of her safety to Mrs. Burgoyne, wisely omitting, however, to say where she was, lest the letter might fall into the hands of the Colonel. The letter, however, was a sufficient assurance of her safety to rejoice Mrs. Burgoyne, and also Constance, to whom she showed it, and set their minds at ease concerning Irene's present condition.

The answer to Irene's Northern missive came after many days, but not by letter. One day, as she was anxiously watching for it, and trusting it was already on its road, she heard the tramp of a horse near the door ; a voice that made her heart bound with joy inquired for her, and the next moment she was locked in Maxwell's arms.

Edward had arrived in Philadelphia from his Southern prison only the day before Irene's letter reached her old governess, and without losing an hour, he set off to find his darling. His long strange silence was

well explained when he told her of his arrest and tedious imprisonment. He had hastened to join her before he gave a thought to the important affairs on which he was engaged previous to his arrest, and he was therefore unwillingly obliged to return home for a few weeks, not choosing to take her with him on so hurried a journey, but at the same time removing her to a place of greater safety than the house of Montgomery was likely to be during its master's occasional absences. He had acquaintances in the territory, for his name, which was well known as that of a strenuous advocate of freedom, secured him many friends among those devoted to the same cause; and he felt no fear in leaving Irene with them while he went to prepare for his marriage and subsequent journey to Boston.

The circumstances of his business allowed, or rather advised his residing in his native state for a year or two, and he trusted to be able to conciliate the affections of his parents for his young wife. They would never suspect her history, and would, he hoped, forgive him his political theories, for

the sake of her sweet face. He returned to Philadelphia, therefore, having first taken Irene to the house of a friend he had known for many years. To that house he was sure no slaveholder would follow her, for, like all those within many miles round, it was protected from Southern invasion by the presence of the brave old man who has since died on an American scaffold, a sufferer in the holy war against unchristian slavery and the cruel tyranny of the South. At this time Captain John Brown was working on his farm, surrounded by the sons and the friends who loved him and the Right, enough to follow him in the bold enterprise which has since made the slave power tremble to its foundation. The attempt failed through treachery, and few of those who in Europe heard of the execution of the old man and his surviving companions understood the object of his undertaking, or knew that the so-called anarchist and incendiarist was a man of the kindest heart and tenderest humanity —hating war itself as unchristian, but hating slavery still more; a man who, foreseeing the fury of the negro insurrections

that will — that *must* break out in the Southern states in a year or two, sought to mitigate the horrors of that time by placing the *inevitable* movement under civilised and Christian control.

CHAPTER III.

Chauncey had meantime brought Constance back to Chestnut Brook, where she was received with tears and the warmest affection. Even the Colonel said as he kissed her, "By Jove! we have missed you, my dear child," and Mrs. Burgoyne's emotion was too great for words.

"I shall never forgive myself for it, Constance," said Mavor, "but I did not know what I was saying. You know our Southern tempers are so fiery, and Harwich had driven me nearly mad."

"And I ought not to have spoken whilst I was so angry," said Constance, as she offered her cheek to his kiss of peace, "I ought to have remembered that she was your aunt."

Mavor made no answer to this; perhaps, because he knew he had not entered into the combat for Aunt Mary's sake. "It was not for her I was angry with Con-

stance," he said to Eleanor afterwards; "but it's no use telling her what is the truth—that this Northern nonsense of hers will ruin her happiness and Chauncey's too if he can't put a stop to it."

"Oh, he will be able, depend upon it, Mavor; she will do nothing to vex him. It never would have happened if he had been at home. Oh, I'm so glad that Constance has come back, I have been thinking all the time I've been ill that I never should see her again."

"Ah, you are full of fancies, Leonore," said her husband, fondly. "I have heard to-day that you are always miserable lest some mischief should happen to baby."

Eleanor tried to laugh, she could not tell him what she feared; but Mrs. Burgoyne had seen that she could not bear to have the infant out of her sight unless one of the family was watching it. It was no use reasoning with Eleanor, she was in evident terror lest some wilful mischief should happen to the child, and Mrs. Burgoyne was obliged to keep it under her own eye whenever it was absent from its mother's room. Eleanor, satisfied whenever it was in her

charge, became calmer, and when she saw how fond Hester, who had been made the baby's nurse, seemed of it, she grew somewhat less anxious for its safety, and hoped, by giving the girl many presents for herself and her own infant, to secure her real love for the little one in her care.

Amongst Chauncey Burgoyne's friends, it had been a surprise to Constance to find that Mr. Alfred Tarleton was one of the dearest and most intimate, and she had only learned it after that gentleman had been a visitor at Oaklands for some time. Before his hostess he could never speak of his friends at Chestnut Brook, and Constance had learned to practise the same reserve; and it was not until one day when Mrs. Bolton was not present, that Mr. Tarleton mentioned the name of Chauncey Burgoyne as his friend. Constance instantly confessed to knowing the family intimately, and Mr. Tarleton, after talking of them for an hour, came to the conclusion, very fortunately for himself, that the obstacle to his projects which he had convinced himself already existed in Miss Annersly's heart, was Chauncey. He made the dis-

covery happily in time, before he had either committed himself or his affections; he prudently left Oaklands, and soon satisfied himself that no better thing could happen than a marriage between his friend and Miss Annersly. It was therefore with great pleasure that he afterwards read a letter from Chauncey informing him of her engagement to himself, and his task of congratulation was easy, as he had only to write to both his friends and praise each one to the other, and exact from them a promise to visit his plantation at some time not very remote, he hoped.

Eustace had met Constance with the greatest manifestation of pleasure, but there was a marked change in him, and she thought for the worse. Had she known the companions he had been consorting with during her absence, her surprise would have been lessened. At this time a fit of sulks came over the young gentleman, owing to his father's refusal to invite his friend Adrian to the house, or permit his son to visit Adrianville. Colonel Burgoyne now saw cause to regret the intimacy which had sprung up between the two young men, for

he learned that the gaming-table had lately been added to the attractions of Adrianville; and though Adrian, out of regard to the Colonel's "prejudices" on this point, had prevented Eustace from joining it, it could not be supposed that this forbearance would be of long duration, and Colonel Burgoyne felt very uneasy on the subject. He therefore made his son decline another invitation to his friend's house, and Eustace was much disgusted thereby. Adrian was lively and amusing—his friends were the same; he prided himself upon his good horses, first-rate dogs, and handsome quadroon servants; and all these were, with his house, at the disposal of his friends. There is no hospitality like Southern hospitality. Eustace consoled himself as well as he could by riding over to a tavern in the wood, where there was a deal of coloured company of both sexes, all anxious to propitiate the good will of the son of so rich a planter as Colonel Burgoyne. His father would willingly have kept him at home, but he was occupied with business correspondence, and Mavor was always engaged overlooking Henning in the field.

If Mavor had really hoped that Chauncey would get the "Northern nonsense" out of Constance's head, he was doomed to be disappointed. She had thought more of the subject during her exile at Oaklands; the heartless selfishness and indifference to suffering which marked the conversation of Heyward Bolton and his friends when they spoke of their human property, and which induced Mrs. Bolton, a slaveholder for forty years, to free her servants rather than leave them to their mercies, had had its effect on Constance, and she would have returned to Chestnut Brook confirmed in her detestation of slavery, even without the arrest of Irene and its consequences. Now the idea of being in any way connected with the maintenance of the system, which, as the mistress of West Creek, she soon must be, was abhorrent to her, and she was intensely pained by hearing a few words of Letta's, spoken when she did not imagine any of the family were near.

"Miss Annersly's very kind at heart now, if it lasts."

"Yes, but it won't last, I tell yer," said Clara; "them Northern ladies is allays

kind at first ; but lors, Letta, 'times they gets worse on our real ladies. My ole missis as I lived with was an Englisher, they said, and she used to be soft enough when I was a little un, but she didn't stop so. I don't think she'd whip us much, but she was allays jawing and scolding round at us."

"Worse nor missis ?" asked Jessy.

"Oh, missis is kind to her," answered Clara, "though I suppose the devil will have her with the rest, if all were known. If Mis' Harwich would say what she knows about that Katie, we'd know something, I guess."

Letta shuddered, but answered, "That was before she was so fond of church, I suppose ?"

"Yes, it was; but that don't make no difference," said Jessy. "Lors ! my ole mas'r was a preacher, and he was the hardest, meanest old sinner that ever went to the devil, I think ; he——"

"Hush, for God's sake ! " murmured her companions, and Constance found them all intent on their work when she came forward.

After hearing this colloquy she felt a perfect dread of becoming one of the hated mistresses of these unwilling and unhappy servants, and the fear hung heavily on her that she might in time become one of the less tender owners, and deserve their hatred and mistrust. Chauncey acknowledged that he had grown more indifferent to the punishment of his hands, and he wondered how Stephen Bland could still remain so soft-hearted.

But still Constance had some comfort in thinking that Chauncey's mind was gradually being awakened to new views upon the subject. She saw he avoided entering into his former favourite political discussions with his brother, and she divined that some doubts upon the slavery question, and his own responsibilities as a slaveholder, had arisen in his mind. She told him one day of Clara's assertion that her English mistress had treated her worse than a native-born Southerner would have done.

Chauncey tried to laugh, but he looked sad, nevertheless. "We must do as well as we can, and bribe them to good beha-

viour by presents and indulgences," he said. "If we were in Virginia, or any state where manumission is easier, we would promise to free them all some day, if they behaved well, and that might keep them in good order."

"Will the law here ever be altered, do you think? Perhaps it may before that time," suggested Constance.

"I fear not," said Chauncey, and the slight tone of sadness with which he said this was music to Constance's heart; "but if it is not, and we are still of the same mind, we must remove our servants to Virginia. I see you are proud of the manumission of the Oaklands' niggers, and you may well be, for it is more than sixty thousand dollars thrown away."

"Thrown away, Chauncey?"

"Well, unemployed then; lost to the heirs, at any rate; will that be the right way to phrase it? You cannot expect me to say, restored to its rightful liberty," and as he laughed he sighed, and said no more.

Some weeks had passed since Constance had returned to Chestnut Brook, and as

Chauncey, confident in Mr. Bland's good management and general ability, felt he might, without hesitation, leave home before the crop was entirely gathered in, Constance was persuaded to fix her wedding-day for the end of October. Her joy may be imagined at the sudden and totally unexpected arrival of her brother at Chestnut Brook a fortnight previously.

"I could not stay another month without seeing you," he concluded, after he had given her a hasty sketch of his fortunes; "and I am indeed glad I came now, as you will be away so soon, and I should have found you flown." He laughed as he spoke, but his gaiety was strangely forced, and Constance could see that he was in much secret agitation and restlessness all the time. His attention was wandering from those present, and he answered their remarks somewhat widely and vaguely. The truth was, Charles was in great uneasiness; for he was very distressed to find his sister's marriage so immediately at hand, and, moreover, on his journey he had heard at Philadelphia of Irene's arrest, and subsequent going to Chestnut Brook. His too

evident agitation could not remain long unnoticed, and when Mrs. Burgoyne left the room, Chauncey and the others withdrew also on various pretexts of business, and the brother and sister were left together.

"Charles, has anything happened?" said Constance, as the door closed behind Eustace, who had left at a sign from Chauncey; "is dear aunt ill, or anything?"

Though Charles had more than one reason for his uneasiness, he could easily account for his anxiety by one only.

"Constance, I have been through Philadelphia on my way here. What of Irene? Is she here now? Can I see her?"

"Good heavens! do you know it already?" exclaimed his sister, in consternation.

"Know it? yes, I do. Oh, that double-faced scoundrel, her father! How he talked of his affection for her when we were at Jeffersonville! Nothing was too good for her. Had he not seemed to set such a value upon her, I might have had courage to speak then. But quick, Constance, is she here with you, and how is she treated by them all?"

"She is not here, Charles," replied Con-

stance; "I was away with a friend when she came, and Mrs. Burgoyne sent her away, and she is now in the Free States."

"In the Free States, do you say? Are you sure of that? They had not heard of that in Philadelphia. Are you sure?"

"In Philadelphia — no, perhaps they would not have heard; but we heard from her a fortnight since. Mrs. Burgoyne has had a letter from her to say she is safe, and has met some people who are very kind to her. There is no address and no date."

"No address and no date? Can I see the letter? I must see it, Constance; I must get to her directly. She shall see that she has friends still, who will not leave her because she is no longer an heiress, and white, as they call themselves. Yes, I must go to her immediately. When I think how tenderly she watched my father; how she sat by him, and sang to him in her sweet angel voice; how she looked when I bade her farewell, and she promised to take care of you, Constance; and think of her being called a slave! — insulted with that name of slave! — insulted by every

man who looks at her! — I wonder how I can keep myself from madness! However, I'll find her, I'll take her safely to the North, and if that sneaking fellow to whom she was to be married is going to cry off, as he seems doing, I will tell her that there is one man who loves her, and that in England ——"

"Charles, you do not love Irene?" exclaimed his sister, in amazement.

"Why should you look so astonished? You surely know I loved her before I left America? What! do you—can you think that her being called *coloured* can affect *me?* Curse on those wicked American prejudices! To call her, *her* coloured!—her with her pure transparent blood and golden hair, who looked as if she were a child of heaven."

"But Charles, she loves Mr. Maxwell," interposed Constance, hurriedly.

"I know that, Constance; but he is gone, and no one knows where he is, and if he does not come to seek her love, I will tell her that I have always loved her. I will go to her at once. Will you get me the letter, dearest sister?"

"But there is no address in it, you cannot go to her, Charles," said Constance, hurrying away to fetch it; and after reading it, and assuring himself that Irene was quite safe, Annersly was reluctantly obliged to agree that, for the present, it would be impossible to find her whereabouts, and that, if she was with friends, he must be content to wait till he could gain some other clue. He said he should go, however, to Philadelphia, and learn if Mrs. Lessing knew where she was, for he thought Maxwell had "chosen to take himself off, and that the task of consoling Irene would be left to him."

Constance shook her head; she had more trust in Maxwell's constancy, but she could not convince her brother of his mistake, and could only entreat him to be outwardly calm and silent as to Irene, now that Colonel Burgoyne and his wife were re-entering the room.

The others soon joined them, and Constance watched with some anxiety to see the mutual impression that her brother and Chauncey produced on each other. Charles was more bent on learning the true

feelings of his sister towards her affianced lover than even on forming an estimate of Chauncey; he was predisposed to believe she could not be really and truly in love with him, and was dismayed to find that the marriage was already so near. There seemed no chance that his representations could be of avail, and it was, therefore, with real relief that he acknowledged to himself, before the evening was over, that Constance looked happy, and as if her choice was one of true affection. As to whether it was likely to prove a fortunate one, Annersly had still many doubts; he was not disposed at the present moment to judge any member of the slave-holding aristocracy favourably, and though he felt personally rather attracted towards Chauncey, he could not forget all that he had heard of the ultra-Southern theories of the future statesman.

"Well, Charles, how do you and he get on?" Constance asked, rather timidly, the next day, after waiting in vain for her brother to introduce the subject. "You all sat up talking very late, I hear."

"Oh, yes, I and Mr. Burgoyne talked

for a couple of hours, I suppose, after you ladies had all left us. I like him very much, Constance, I am most agreeably surprised. I thought when I first came that his brother was he, and it was a shock; I must say I felt readier to shoot than to like him."

"Now be serious, Charles. You did not take Mavor for Chauncey?"

"Indeed, but I did; he met me so cordially. I must say he seems an amiable fellow too, but certainly not the man I expected would be your choice. I like your Mr. Burgoyne, I like him very much, but I wish he was not a planter."

"Oh, Charles, you cannot wish it more than I do," answered his sister, sadly; and Charles felt it would not do to say more. Chauncey joined them at the same moment, and Annersly saw by the look with which Constance turned to him that, whether her life with him was to be happy or not, any interference on his part was utterly out of the question.

Constance was exceedingly desirous that her brother should stay at Chestnut Brook until her marriage; but he was in a hurry to go to Philadelphia, to learn further news

of Irene; he could not give up the idea that, if Maxwell cooled in his protestations of affection, she might listen to his suit if skilfully urged; and pleading urgent business at the North, he refused alike his sister's entreaty and Mrs. Burgoyne's pressing invitation, to remain at the plantation.

A letter which arrived from Philadelphia changed his resolution. It was to Constance from Mrs. Lessing, and defeated all Charles' but half-confessed hopes that Maxwell might prove faithless after all. Mrs. Lessing wrote that Maxwell had arrived in Philadelphia, having been for many weeks imprisoned in jail in South Carolina. He had never been brought to trial, but had been released through the intervention of a gentleman who was intimately acquainted with his family. He had received news of Irene's safety in Kansas the very day that he reached Philadelphia, and had set off immediately to find her, and evidently had no thoughts of drawing back, or of giving up his darling.

This letter Constance put into her brother's hand, walking away herself that he might read it alone; but she could not

help watching him from a distance, and saw the sudden start which showed his having reached the announcement of Maxwell's going to find Irene. He continued either re-reading the letter, or pretending to do so, for some minutes; and when he came back slowly towards her, she saw he was under great and painful excitement. He merely remarked, however, as he reached her, —

"Abominable that a man can be fastened up in jail without trial or crime! Well, Constance, I see no use in wasting time, as there are seven days clear before the great day. I shall leave here and run down to Jeffersonville, and see the place there."

Annersly's voice faltered, and he could not proceed any further. His sister pressed his hand affectionately, saying,—

"You can go there, Charles, when I am away, but do stop with me just this week. I feel I want you so much."

"I'll stop then if you want me, dear; if you think they really like to have a Britisher in the house; but I can't even make a pretence of agreeing with them in their Southern theories. I can't bear to think of you,

Conny, being a slave-mistress, and ordering those poor niggers to be punished."

"Now, nonsense, Charlie, be quiet," said his sister, stopping his mouth with a kiss. "You are as cruel in teasing as when you were a boy;" but she sighed as her own heart re-echoed his words. Annersly sighed too, and evinced his dissatisfaction by sending a great stone splashing into the little river, or the brook, as it was modestly called in the country of mighty rivers, and which ran along smoothly under the chestnuts, which with it gave a name to the estate.

"Water looks placid enough," Charles observed, as the circles slowly widened on the surface. "Well, you want me to stop, so I will, and I must hope they won't be angry at my British prejudices."

"You may say what you like to Chauncey; he will listen to it," said Constance.

"Ah, you have taught him that, I suppose; he has had to grow patient with listening to you."

"No, he always was ready to give a fair hearing to any opponent; but you must be careful how you speak before the others. I used to think there was no need, but I know there is now."

"I'll be careful, trust me," replied Charles, and he had every intention of being careful for his sister's sake. He felt strongly on the subject of slavery, but since his sister was going to become a slaveowner herself, his hands were tied. He made no secret of his opinions, but avoided the subject of niggers or Southern institutions as far as he was able, and Mavor, already warned by his experience of British prejudice in Constance, and unwilling to annoy Chauncey by any dispute or disagreement with the Englishman, imitated his guest's reserve and forbearance.

With all his care, however, Charles could not avoid the question entirely; his very ignorance of American politics exposed him to danger, and he soon lost ground in the estimation of Mavor, who complained to Eleanor that the Englishman was to the full as fanatical as the worst abolitionist that ever breathed.

"Oh, he knows nothing of us, and only repeats the common talk of all Northerners and Englishmen," replied Eleanor, soothingly; and she took down the atlas and examined the route by which Constance and

Chauncey were to pursue their wedding trip. The rest of the party gathered round the atlas, and the Englishman's ill-luck soon involved him in an unfortunate argument.

"How is it," he observed, pointing to the map of the United States, "that the Indian territory of Kansas should cause so much disturbance about slavery or non-slavery? It is above the Southern line, and ought to be a free state without any dispute; ought it not?"

"There's no ought in the case," replied Mavor, sharply, and Chauncey added, more mildly,—

"So it would undoubtedly have been under the old law, but it has been lately enacted that the question shall be determined by the vote of the inhabitants themselves, and not by Federal authority."

Charles, thus introduced to the celebrated Kansas and Nebraska bill, and wholly unqualified to judge of the merits of squatter sovereignty, applauded the new law as highly constitutional and judicious.

"But then how comes it," he asked, "after so admirable a provision, that there

should be all this disturbance? We hear of regular set-to fights and several murders."

"Because the rebels, that is the Free-soilers, find that they cannot have it all their own way, and are trying to put down the peaceable Southern settlers," replied Mavor. "They have crowded into the territory from all parts of the North by the help of some illegal emigration societies, and now, having chosen their own legislature, they are discontented with it, and are clamouring for imaginary rights. They are just such a set as I fancy your Chartists must have been, and fellows whose passions Montgomery and old Brown know how to use for their own factious purposes. It's just what everyone knew the Northern institutions and cant must come to."

"Northern institutions? Why, I thought they were the very model of a republican government," said the Englishman, in surprise.

"They are fast leading us into anarchy, that I know," replied Mavor. "No, a republic should be supported by intelligent and patriotic citizens, who can sacrifice their

own interests and private feelings for the *res publica;* and there is not one of these Northern clamourers who would do that. There can be no true and successful republic except in a slave society. You will not get good government except where the institution of slavery exists; that is, a natural sub-division of the population into the upper and the working class; and only where it obtains is there a real chance for the success or development of true republicanism."

"Well, but what are they doing in Kansas?" said Charles, who was desirous to escape the argument in favour of slave society; "what are they actually doing at the present moment?"

"Robbing and insulting respectable citizens, murdering unoffending men," replied Mavor, "defying the Federal authority and their own governors, overthrowing the acts of their own legislature, and every other kind of excess conceivable. Why, Federal troops have had to march into the territory to keep order; the rebels even shot a sheriff when in the discharge of his duty."

"Take care, Mr. Annersly, how you re-

ceive our statements," observed Chauncey, laughing, "they may be *exparte* ones, for all you know. You had better investigate the subject further."

Charles laughed; Mavor frowned. "Why did you say that to him?" he whispered, as Annersly followed Constance to another table.

"Why, I should not wish him to quote your name or mine in support of the facts or falsehoods you were furnishing him with."

"Falsehoods! all I have said is true."

"Well, if it is literally true, yet it omits the one false step on our side which gave some colour of right to the rebels."

"Oh, you mean our seizing the polls and ballot boxes? Well, you know, I think it was good strategy, and quite defensible, considering the interests at stake."

"It was most unconstitutional, and if the Southern cause is right, we ought to be careful how we injure it by any illegal and hasty act," answered his brother.

"Well, if it was unconstitutional, so is Free-soilism illegal and unconstitutional; and if the North employs that engine against

our interests, we were justified in meeting it even by illegal means. It could bring capital and numbers to attack us, and we have to meet the power of money both by stratagem and by force."

While Mavor was speaking, Constance was replacing the atlas on its shelf, and as Annersly stood by her elbow, she said,—

"You used, when we were at Jeffersonville, to preach caution to me upon the Slavery question, Charles, now I must remind you of your ancient prudence."

"I did not intend to run into mischief at all, dear sis', but, to confess the truth, I was quite ignorant that this Kansas affair had anything to do with it. Our English newspapers keep us shamefully uninformed upon such points. Trust me, I will say nothing about their pet institution; but it's a horrid business," he added, with a sigh, as he took down a novel.

"Oh, Charles, indeed it is, and, as a stranger, you don't see the worst; I did not for many months, and you hear only the best side of it."

"Ah! but I've heard something else too, where I have been, down at Brass river.

There was a man there who had been up and down the African coast for years, and I used to go to drink tea with him in his shanty, and talk of the things he had seen. He told me of that colonisation humbug which they are all canting about here, and I daresay they have persuaded you it's a good thing too."

"No; I have learnt to be suspicious of anything that is in great repute here."

"Quite right, too; a good general rule, I say, for this country. Well, you know how they talked about putting down the slave-trade, calling it piracy, and all that sounds right, the hypocrites! I could tell you what I have known; however, to go on to the colonisation theory. They have made Liberia a safety-valve to send the slaves they manumit to, and a few poor coloured men, who are too uppish to suit them, and then they send them back to their native country as they call it; but whether to die of starvation or fever there, without any means of support, no one cares."

"And is there any ground for that dreadful supposition?"

"That has just found its way to Ame-

rica? That's it; I see what you are coming to,—that they are re-enslaved, and brought back here again. Yes, they are, it seems; at least, you know what an excitement the affair of this ship has just made — the *Regina Cœli;* but I dare say the matter has been hushed up in the South, though it has caused a sensation everywhere else. That French emperor, it seems, is a regular slaveholder at heart; but whether it is he or the Yankees who are most to blame, cannot be determined. This ship was laden, you know, I suppose, at Liberia with emigrants, as they were called — emigrants in chains—and they rose on the ship's crew, and afterwards sought protection from the British consul and one of our African squadron. The French say that these poor fellows who were chained up like slaves were free American emigrants — Americans, mind — and the surgeon swears two hundred of them could read and write. Translate that as you best can. One New York paper suggests that it is important the Liberian authorities should be exonerated, for the honour of America."

"No; I cannot believe it, Charles. They

would never make men, legally manumitted, slaves again—not in such a wholesale way. Common honour ——"

"Honour among thieves," replied Charles; "I can believe anything of a nation who tolerate slavery among themselves; and as to the slave-trade being piracy ——"

"We'll talk of that another time," said Constance, suddenly perceiving that Chauncey stood behind them, and must have heard all their conversation.

CHAPTER IV.

In the afternoon Eleanor and Lucy drove over to Madison, and as Mavor and his father went out to the cotton-field, Chauncey was left to entertain Annersly, and they sat lounging in the verandah, neither, however, seeming very anxious to converse.

"You saw something of the slave-trade carried on by American ships?" said Chauncey, rousing himself at last from a long and apparently painful reverie. "You know that many of our citizens are truly and conscientiously opposed to it, and our government keeps vessels of war on the coast to prevent it?"

"Yes; I saw your vessels lying at anchor, but the general impression on the coast is that they wish success to the trade. They never catch sight of a slaver if they can help it, and if they do give chase, they take care to lose her."

"I can hardly believe that to be the

case," said Chauncey; "I know that many of our officers must feel very indifferent to the subject, for they are of Southern families, and perhaps, have even, at times doubted whether it is advisable to close the traffic; but, still, as they have no interest in the trade, and their own interests as seamen point to doing the work they are sent to do well, they have every incentive to look out for slavers, and bring them in as prizes."

"Yes," said Charles, drily, "but are they sent to do the work? At least I have heard *that* doubted by Americans themselves. I have heard it from many sources, but the one I rely on was an American officer from one of those very ships; I do not feel at liberty to give my authority at present, though I don't doubt, as he is a brave man, that he will himself come forward to disclose the truth some day; but he was one of your officers, and I only repeat his words, when I say that the captain took care never to see a slave-ship if he could help; and if it were seen and reported by mistake, never tried to catch the chase. I am not surprised that

there is a feeling of indifference, as you say, among Southern men on the point; but it rests with the government to make good its promises, if it has any political honesty or good faith. It has pledged itself in the face of Europe to put down the trade, and it ought to see its pledge redeemed."

"But the government is not proved insincere because its officers choose to evade its orders," said Chauncey. "The negligence on the stations may proceed from deliberate intention on the part of the captain, not from any instructions at home."

"Well, if that is the case,—if the officers of the United States' service are willing to support the slave-trade against their own government, it only shows what I feared was true, that the whole people of America is in reality slaveholding at heart," said Annersly. "I believe it is so, and that the North cares no more for freedom, at least the freedom of the negroes, than the South; in fact, that New York and New England would be as Southern in principle as Georgia and Carolina, if their

climate would only allow them to grow cotton."

"It is probable the same thing is true of England, with all her boasted abolitionism, if what I hear is true," said Chauncey, quietly. "We find Englishmen make as good slaveholders as ourselves when they settle in this country; and it is said, on credible authority, that large manufacturing houses in Manchester not only hold mortgages on our slaves, but do not scruple to realise the money by selling the negroes by auction."

Charles was silent—he would willingly have refused credence to Chauncey's assertion, but he had met at Charleston with two or three of his countrymen, and been had astonished to hear them defending Southern rights, and the necessity of slavery, as ably as any Carolinian, and the recollection of this prevented him continuing the argument. After some moments Chauncey suggested a walk, and they went towards the avenue to see if the ladies were returning from Madison.

"Nevertheless, Mr. Annersly," said Chauncey, after a pause, "the slave-trade,

though it seems cruel, is the means of bringing the negroes to a civilised country, and as slaves, here they are infinitely better off than at home."

"Indeed, I cannot agree, after seeing the amount of civilisation which they have at present at home," said Charles. "I think they are as well off in their own country as here, without being torn from their families and half stifled in the slavers into the bargain. The slave-trade is the very curse of Africa; the people would become sufficiently civilised in a few years, if they could be let alone to grow their corn and their cotton in peace; but the prospect of gain stirs up all the fiercest and strongest of the chiefs to make war on their weaker and more industrious neighbours, and devastate and destroy whole communities, that they may carry a few hundred slaves to the baracoons of the Spanish and American traders."

Charles ceased speaking as Mavor approached them, but he was walking quickly, and passed them by with only a bow and smile; he looked vexed, and struck the magnolia trees with his rattan as he walked,

as if he wished to get rid of his ill-humour on them or something else. Annersly continued.

"I saw something of the negro people before I left—I mean the real people in their own villages, who had had hardly any intercourse with Europeans. When I left the station and was going to Sierra Leone, I landed with a friend and spent a fortnight with him shooting on the banks of one of those rivers that are part of the Quorra or its branches. We saw the people, the negroes I mean, and were quite struck with their industrious habits, and their little villages and corn-fields—everything seemed so thriving and prosperous. I am no farmer, but still I could see their crops were good, and they worked hard. They were very hospitable to us; we were entertained by the chief of one town, a fine young fellow, he was hardly a savage, certainly not a savage as your brother described savages the other day; he had the stuff of a man and a good statesman in him, and we were really pleased with him and his village. One of our guides spoke English very well, and interpreted fluently

between us and the chief. Well, we went on, and after staying ten days in the high grounds, where we found the climate somewhat better, we came back. People said we had done a very foolish thing to go, and we deserved to die of the fever; however, we did not, and we came back to the village where we had lodged before; we meant to have a long talk with the young chief. The village was gone! burnt down! every soul, man and woman, carried off into slavery, except two or three men who were left dying of their wounds, and one or two old women who were too feeble, I suppose, to be worth taking away; perhaps there were a few children left, but I don't know, —the people of the village were all gone. It was another chief who had come down upon them with his warriors; they had killed half the men before they could capture the rest, and had driven them away to ship them for a baracoon on the coast, where they were to wait for an American vessel. My God, it was a most terrible sight—there were all these bodies lying among the ruins of the little huts, for it was only the day before we came,

and they were hacked and cut to pieces in a horrible way."

Seeing his listener was deeply attentive, Charles went on. He had no idea of the special interest which the subject had for Chauncey, as the long and earnest advocate for the slave-trade; and he had much more to say about it, having received full details from a man he had met with at his own station. He talked on for nearly an hour, relating all his informant had seen of the sufferings of the negroes, as the slave coffles were driven or conveyed by water to the baracoons, till at last Chauncey, half-stifling a sigh, said—

"You are aware, Mr. Annersly, that it will not do to say all this to anybody but me, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, I know the temper of your countrymen," replied Charles; "but I heard that you yourself never minded giving an opponent fair play, so I speak freely, but, oh, it's a painful subject! let us change it. Don't you smoke?" he continued, looking out a fresh cigar.

"No, I have given it up."

"What! given it up? ah! to please

Conny, I suppose. Well, she'll never get *me* to forego it for any consideration, I can tell her; but there is some one coming to call us. Dinner, I presume; shall we not wait for Mrs. Mavor and your sister?"

While his brother and the Englishman had walked towards the gate of the avenue, Mavor went to the house and found his way to the butler's pantry, where Letta was arranging a grand show of glass and china, in preparation for the next day's feast. She did not perceive his entrance, and when he laid his hand on her shoulder, she said gaily, "Is it you, Harvey?"

"No, it's I, Letta," said Mavor, sharply, and she turned round with a start of terror and confusion. "Ah! I know you wish to see Harvey, but I won't stand this, you hypocrite — you ungrateful minx! I know you were down at the stables yesterday when your mistress wanted you, and you were not to be found."

"Indeed, I was not, mas'r," Letta answered, firmly, though with blanched cheeks, "I was down to see Clara, I was."

"You lie, you know you do," exclaimed Mavor, angrily, giving her a slight shake as

he spoke; "and mind this, Letta, if ever you speak to him again, I'll pay him for it. I'll cowhide him myself, I will, and you shall wash his shoulders with salt and water to make you remember," and Mavor turned away as he gave this threat, and left the pantry.

Letta had grown pale, and she sank on a chair, faint and dizzy with terror, as she heard his menaces against Hargrave. She was roused by Ellie's voice, and starting up hastily, pushed the chair back; its upper rail caught the tray she had rested on the table, and half its contents lay in shivers on the stone floor as the housekeeper entered, and her cry of dismay drew her mistress, who was in the kitchen, to the scene of the disaster. Letta made all the excuses she could devise, but she was clearly in fault, and was sentenced to be punished that evening.

"Never mind, you can escape it," said Jessy, laughing. "Go along and ask Mr. Mavor to get you off."

"No, I shan't go. I don't mind the whipping. I shan't go and ask him to do anything," replied Letta, sullenly.

"Oh, you'd best, Letta, 'deed," said the negro girl, in a tone of sincere sympathy. "You don't know what a real whippin' is —you've never been let to have one. You'd better go to him."

Letta shook her head, but after a few minutes of reflection the dread of punishment overcame her reluctance, and taking her little child by the hand she went to find Mavor, and beg him to intercede for her. He was at dinner, and it was long before he came out, for as Chauncey and Annersly had left the table with Constance and Mrs. Burgoyne, Mavor and the Colonel sat long over their dessert, and Letta saw that he was rather the worse for wine as he at length crossed the hall, where she was anxiously waiting for him.

"Master, I am to be whipped for breaking some glasses; I am very, very sorry, I've done mischief. You won't let me be whipped, will you, now?"

"Why, you don't deserve that I should beg you off, Letty," said Mavor, trying to open the hall-door, and not seeing very distinctly how to do it.

"But you have never let me be whipped,

dear mas'r, and you won't let them do it this time, will you?" she said, coaxingly, and laying her hand on his arm. Mavor began to relent, but at that instant the carriage, containing Eleanor and Lucy, drove up to the door, and the sight of Harvey, who held the reins, recalled all his anger.

"No, I have begged you off often enough already; it will do you good, you jade; it will teach you to be grateful for all my kindness. Leave go of my arm, and get out of the hall. What business have you here?" and disengaging his arm from her hold, he opened the door, and ran out to meet his wife and sister.

"Well, ladies, have you brought home everything? All your white satin ribbons right? I have been wondering what kept you. I hope you have dined with the Pierces, for our dinner was over two hours ago."

"I am glad you did not wait," said Eleanor, gaily. "How's baby?"

"All right, I believe. Well, you look tired out, Eleanor, and so is mamma, for she has been hard at work all day."

"Well, thank goodness, I think we've

got all ready," said Lucy, going to find her mother, while Eleanor went to look after her infant, who was lying asleep in its nurse's arms. It was the first time she had left it for so many hours, and she had felt some return of her former terrors for its safety when out of her sight; but the fond caresses which Hester bestowed on it somewhat re-assured the mother, and she testified her satisfaction with the girl by presenting her with a new print gown and a pair of shoes for her own baby. She further told her that Mrs. Burgoyne intended giving each of the women in the house a bright ribbon on the morrow in honour of Mr. Chauncey's wedding-day, at the same time that a glass of rum was to be served out to each of the field hands. Had the wedding occurred at any other time the negroes would have had a holiday, but there was now too much to be done on the plantation.

Either Mavor did beg Letta off, or Mrs. Burgoyne remitted her sentence, for she was not punished that evening. Henning, however, had plenty of flogging to do; the day had been hot, and many of the negroes fell short in their tasks. A field hand had been

missed that morning; Henning searched for him all over the plantation, and now guessed that he had gone to a distance to visit his wife, a pleasure which, though it had been promised him, had been withdrawn as he was about to set out. The man, however, feeling that his wife, who had just given birth to a child, and expected him to come and see the baby, would be alarmed at his non-appearance, evaded Henning's vigilance, and slipped away, regardless of consequences. He returned after midnight, and found the overseer waiting for him with a strong negro, and he was immediately secured and flogged, first by Henning, and then, when he could no longer lift his arm, by the other negro; while his cries and groans warned the slaves in the neighbouring cabins of the danger of imitating his example and crime.

Only four hours before the infliction of this punishment Colonel Burgoyne had dilated upon the indulgences which his hands received, and the contentedness of the negro population in general, for the edification of Mr. Annersly.

"Well, their being contented is a for-

tunate thing," said Charles; "however, they are more an affectionate than a reasoning race. I believe they are generally much attached to kind owners, are they not?"

"Attached? indeed they are, and very faithful, as a rule; there is sometimes a naturally discontented and turbulent one, and if he happens to be severely punished, as such fellows generally manage to be, he becomes morose and sullen, and gives a deal of trouble; but the others are good creatures, though as lazy as tortoises."

"But can you trust them? Are you never afraid of insurrection among them?" said Charles. Colonel Burgoyne saw he was talking with an inquiring and not easily satisfied observer, and therefore replied,—

"Well, we are sometimes a little anxious, because while there are hot-headed and discontented ones among the niggers there might be mischief, for they are led astray like children, and they have no power of judging for themselves; but as to their fidelity, I would trust myself unarmed among my own niggers without scruple, if there were a riot. I don't say I would, if

there were one next door to me, because, you know, rebellion is contagious, like small-pox, but I should, if it were only twenty miles distant, so as to give me and my hands fair play and time to understand one another. Well, to-morrow you will see them all made happy, Mr. Annersly, and I wish I could add, all sober, but I fear the majority will be hopelessly intoxicated in honour of your sister. But I see it is late, and I wish you good night."

"Well, good evening, Conny, and God bless you!" said Charles, as he passed her in the hall. "To-morrow you will be made an American, but don't lose all your old British prejudices for that, mind."

"Don't fear that for me," replied Constance, forcing a laugh, but turning away her face that he might not see the tears which his ill-advised remark called into her eyes. She went up to her own room, but did not try to rest; she sat looking at her trunks, half packed for her journey, and thinking of the past and of the future. The next day was to change her whole life, and though she was willing it should, her reflections were serious, and even tinged

with some sadness and foreboding. She would no longer be free to act entirely as her conscience would advise her, and added to this reflection was a vague fear that troubles were waiting for her and Chauncey —that his union with her would injure him in the estimation of his political friends — that the attempts he and she might make to improve the condition of their own negroes would bring suspicion on him and irritate Colonel Burgoyne, and she might again be accused as the destroyer of the family peace.

The clock on the staircase struck two; her wedding-day was already come, and though she smiled at the thought, she could not help crying also. She wiped away the tears, however, and resolutely saying that it would not do to disgrace herself and Chauncey by heavy eyes and pale cheeks in the morning, she prepared to take a few hours' rest. But she was suddenly startled by a distant sound, that resembled, she thought, the cries of a human voice under terrible suffering. She could not help shuddering and trembling as it was repeated in a long, low moaning. She went

to the window, but found it was already open, and though she leaned far out of it, she could hear nothing more distinctly than before, for the sound came from the other side of the house. Had she heard it in the daytime, or even in the evening, she would have supposed it was a field hand being whipped, but at this hour it seemed more like the cry of some suffering or even wounded person calling for assistance. Her imagination was strongly excited, and she opened her door, deliberating whether she should call Mrs. Burgoyne, or wake Hester, who slept with the baby in a room adjoining her young mistress. She hesitated about disturbing them, however, until she had further investigated what the strange moaning might be. It came from the northern side of the plantation, perhaps from the river, and she wondered that it had not attracted the attention of Chauncey and Eustace, whose windows looked in that direction. All was quiet nevertheless in the house; she listened to hear some window open, but every one appeared fast asleep, and at last she resolved to go down into the old school-room, and

unfastening the shutters, listen there with more chance of success, as it had a northern view, and from thence she could distinguish whether the sound came, as she supposed, from the negro quarters. She was still dressed, so she immediately took her candle and stole softly down the polished oak staircase, which, well built and fastened together, did not betray her by a single creak. She opened the school-room door with caution; but as she unfastened the window shutters a heavy bar fell with a crash, and extinguishing her candle left without light. The moon, however, was very bright, and she stepped out on the stone terrace before the window. Here, in the open air, and with no building intervening between her and the sound she was listening for, she could easily distinguish that it came from the negro quarters, and felt no longer any doubt but that it was a slave undergoing punishment, though at that unusual hour. There were brutal voices, too, mingling with the moans. The mystery which had alarmed her was all explained, and very sad, but no longer frightened, she reclosed the window. In

the depressed and excited state of her nerves, it seemed a bad omen to herald in her wedding morning.

She fastened the shutters with some difficulty, and being now in complete darkness, she commenced groping her way towards the door carefully, as she remembered that the few chemical stores which Eustace had once collected for his laboratory were still standing on the tables, and might at any moment be thrown down. She had to move several chairs out of her path, and at last, to her great relief, found the wall; but as she put out her hand to reach the door, she encountered the danger she had so much feared, and heard a sharp crash of broken glass, and the fall of a heavy pile of books at the same instant. Recollecting that sulphuric acid was among the stores of the unlucky chemist, she made the best of her way from the spot without paying much attention to the noiselessness of her movements. And now, roused by the crash, Lucy's lap-dog began to bark loud and furiously. At the same time she heard a movement in the house itself.

"Oh, dear, they will be quite alarmed —

they will think that some one is ill, or that there are thieves, who knows?" she thought; and she tried again to grope her way to the door, but in her hurry and confusion it was quite two minutes before she could find it, and meantime, she knocked down another precious chemical, but fortunately without injury to herself. At last she found the handle of the door, and got out into the hall; the dog was still barking, and she heard the sound of feet hurrying along the corridor. She hastened up the staircase — all was dark, but at the entrance of the corridor she was met by Mavor, revolver in hand.

"My God! is it you, Constance? Go back, keep in your own room! You will be murdered directly if you go down there."

"What is the matter, Mavor, what is the matter?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Go into your own room, and keep there, for heaven's sake! Go to Eleanor, her door is the nearest. It is locked, but she will let you in. Go on, go on."

"But what is it?" said Constance; "is anything really the matter?" But a light

now appeared at the end of the corridor, and Charles cried:

"Come here, Constance — make haste, don't be afraid. Keep cool, for the honour of Old England," he added in a lighter tone, as he saw her safe by his side. "Now go and lock yourself up in that room, and don't open the door again until I tell you. They fear there is a disturbance among the negroes."

"Among the negroes!" Constance clasped her hands in terror.

"Where is Constance? It was her voice," exclaimed Chauncey, as he hurried forward from the back staircase.

"She is all right here — she is all right, thank Heaven!" said Charles, "but she would come out to reconnoitre."

"Oh, keep out of the way, for God's sake, my darling!" said Chauncey; "do not be afraid, my angel, we can withstand them. We are four strong men and well armed."

"Five, are we not?" said Eustace, bustling up, his teeth chattering, but nevertheless showing a bold front. He held a short dagger in his hand; and as she looked bewildered from one to the other, by the dim

light she saw they were all completely armed with dirks and revolvers. "Where is papa ?" said Eustace, hurriedly.

"He has gone down to see if Henning is safe; he has the dogs with him. You get out my rifle."

"It's here," replied Eustace, laying down his weapon for a moment to lift a heavy rifle from the ground; "but I hear nothing now—I shall go after papa."

"Stay where you are," said Mavor, authoritatively.

"No, you must not go, Eustace," said Chauncey; "but I will; he ought not to be alone. But you, Eustace, stop here by Mavor. Remember the back staircase; if one of the wretches come up here, it's all over with the children and mamma."

"Don't fear me, Chauncey; I will never let one of the devils get past me while I have a ball left," said the boy, stoutly.

"Watch the back staircase, then, and shoot man or woman if they try to mount. Constance, darling, I trust it will all end well yet," said Chauncey, but his face showed that he feared the worst, and Constance saw his departure with terror. He

crossed the hall, looked into several of the rooms, and finally opened the drawing-room window and went out. After a few moments of breathless suspense, they heard him return and carefully bar the shutters after him.

"I hear no sound at all," he said to Mavor; "there is a light in Henning's window, so my father is with him, but I can hear nothing."

"The wretches are uncommonly quiet now," said Charles. "I am astonished that they should be so still, but I didn't hear them at first."

"Oh, when did you hear them, Charles?" said Constance.

"I didn't hear them at all; I slept through everything until the dog began to bark, and some one—Colonel Burgoyne I think it was—called to me to get up and arm."

"Did you hear anything before I opened the shutters in the school-room?"

"What! have you been down-stairs already?" said Mavor, in consternation. "Oh, Constance, how could you be so rash? Had you heard anything before, then?

Why, they must be close to the school-room window."

"It was from the school-room the noise that I heard," said Eustace. "Have you been there, Constance? Did you hear them? What waked you first?"

"A sound from the quarters, but it was not in the house that I heard."

"Not in the house itself then?" said Chauncey, stopping as he was half-way down the staircase.

"What noise? a whistle? or yell? or what? What was the signal?" cried Eustace.

"Oh, speak quickly, Constance," said Mavor's voice from the darkness below, while Chauncey came back and stood again by her side.

"Was there any noise at all, Conny?" said Charles, impatiently.

Constance tried to explain. "I heard a man's voice shrieking, I thought, and I went to see what it was."

"Yes, yes; do you think it was Harvey, or was it that devil Jonas?" said Mavor.

"Were they whispering, or talking boldly? How many do you think there were, darling?" said Chauncey, breathlessly.

"Henning was there, and I think one or two more," said Constance; "but that was not the noise which you mean."

"Henning? were they murdering him?" asked Chauncey, in horror; "was he crying for assistance?"

"No, no; I think he was all safe then. I thought it was a negro who was screaming, and Henning was whipping him," said Constance, growing very bewildered.

"Whipping him? What on earth do you mean, Constance?" said Mavor, angrily.

"I don't know," said Constance, in utter confusion; "I thought it was only a negro being punished, and I went down to see what it was. I made some of the noise, for I opened the shutters."

"But did the dog bark before then, or not till afterwards?" said Mavor, quickly.

"Afterwards—not till afterwards. I do not think there was any stir in the house itself till some one ran along the corridor."

"I believe she has been the whole head and front of the offending," exclaimed Charles; "I am sure it is so."

"It can't have been a false alarm!" cried Eustace.

"No, no, it is not," said Chauncey; "I was awake, and I heard other sounds." But Charles burst out laughing.

"No, no, it is she who has frightened us all out of our wits, there is no mistake; and we have been sounding the tocsin and crying murder because she has been out star-gazing by moonlight. Here, put up your bright swords and your revolvers. There is nothing the matter. I will go and find Colonel Burgoyne. I am not afraid, not I, to walk across the plantation, only I will have a lantern. Perhaps, at night time, he will take me for a nigger. In the dark all cats are black."

"Do you think it is but a false alarm?" said Chauncey anxiously to his brother.

"I am really hoping it is, but I will take a revolver and go round the house, then down to the quarters, and see that all the hands are quiet."

Mavor stopped, for at that instant a long and peculiar whistle sounded under the window of an adjoining room.

"There is my father, thank Heaven! and he has found all right at the quarters," said Chauncey. "It has been a false alarm,

but, really, I thought it was all over with us."

"Yes, I think I never remember being so frightened before," said Mavor, heaving a long breath. "I do not know why we have been so extra frightened."

"It is having so much more to lose now, I suppose," said Chauncey, looking fondly at Constance, whom Charles, in a truly fraternal manner, had commenced scolding for her awkwardness in alarming them all so needlessly. "Will you go to mamma, sweet one, and tell her that all is right?" said Chauncey, interrupting Annersly's exhortations, "I will go and chain up the dogs."

Constance went to Mrs. Burgoyne's room, but found that Eustace had already flown to assure the ladies of their safety, and his mother, with Georgy on her knee, was fervently thanking Heaven that their terrors were so groundless. Lucy, only half dressed and trembling in every limb, stood holding Frank by the hand and looking out of the window towards the overseer's cottage, where she knew her father had gone. Letta stood near them—a circumstance which

did not surprise Constance, as she knew that she often slept on a mat in Mrs. Burgoyne's chamber; but she was alarmed at the idea that the slave-girl should have witnessed all the terror of her master's family. Hester, too, must have seen it, as well as Lucy's maid, and the nurse who slept with Georgy, but, at the same time, she trusted the sight of the pistols and fire-arms might have produced a salutary effect on them if they were disposed to triumph in their owner's fears. Mrs. Burgoyne was evidently mindful of their presence, for when Miss Annersly hoped that she had not been very much frightened, she replied —

"Frightened, dear child? Oh no! I knew there was no cause to be frightened, but I was very unhappy, for I was afraid Mavor would have had to shoot some of the hands if they were really in disorder. I am glad indeed that it is really all a mistake, for it would have spoiled your wedding day, my love. By the bye, the day is already come, so give me a kiss, my own dear daughter, Heaven bless you!"

Constance felt as Mrs. Burgoyne pressed her lips to her forehead that she was trem-

bling and almost unable to speak, but Colonel Burgoyne at that moment entered his wife's room and said in his usual cheerful tone,

"Well, Lucilla, it's all a mistake." He glanced at the servants present, and continued, "I am glad to say the hands are all quiet, and I have had no need to punish any of them. It was that boy Eustace who got up the alarm; he could not sleep for thinking of his new pistols, and had us all up at the first sound to show off his prowess."

"Oh, papa, what a shame!" exclaimed Eustace. "We believe it was all Constance's doing."

"Nonsense! never mind, go off to bed, my boy," and the Colonel, with his most gentlemanly air, turned to Constance, and added, "My dear Miss Annersly, this is hard upon you when you have to appear in your very best looks to-morrow. Letta, take Miss Georgy, and get her to bed as fast as you can."

Constance left the room, and in the passage found Chauncey, to whom she gave a short account of all that she knew of the

beginning of the alarm, and Chauncey, with her explanation, felt assured that she alone, along with Henning's unusual choice of an hour for punishment, had occasioned the alarm.

"I'll row Henning well for it," said Mavor; "what need had he to whip the boy then? He could have locked him up till morning."

"Did you too think, Charles, that it was a rising of the slaves?" said Constance, as she stopped for a minute at his room, the door of which stood open.

"Bless you! I had no time to think of anything," said Charles, kissing her. "I hear a smash, and coming out of my room to know the cause, I find everybody in a heap at once with bowie-knives, revolvers, blunderbusses, and I know not what else, Colonel Burgoyne calling upon everybody to be calm, and rushing off like a madman through the back private door to unchain the dogs, I am told. Nay, Old England must forgive me if I was as much of a fool as the rest of them."

"Heigh ho! I did not think they had

these fears," said Constance, and she went back to her own room, sorrowful and sad, as a new feature of her Southern life opened before her.

CHAPTER V.

Four weeks later, Constance and Chauncey, having completed their intended tour, arrived at a small town in Georgia, where they were to wait for the coming of Charles and likewise of Mr. Tarleton, who had claimed the old promise of a visit from them at the earliest opportunity. Chauncey had selected the place of rendezvous for Annersly, as being within a day's journey of his friend's plantation, intending to ride over to him during the few weeks that he and Constance spent in the neighbourhood. But Mr. Tarleton would not acquiesce in this arrangement. He insisted that his friends should accompany him to his own house, and send to Charles to meet them there.

"Less than a fortnight's visit I will not take, Chauncey, when it has been promised me these five years, and never fulfilled till

now; and you talk of going to Europe for six months again; indeed, I shall insist on seeing a little of you first. Mr. Annersly must come to me. I'll find him some shooting, but come you shall."

To return to Mr. Annersly; he had remained at Chestnut Brook after his sister's wedding, in consequence of the pressing invitation of Colonel and Mrs. Burgoyne. A week after Constance was gone, Mr. Ellsland rode over to the plantation. He was inclined to be very friendly with the young Englishman, and somewhat astonished him, and discomposed Mavor, by an exposition of his own peculiar political views, which he insisted were equally shared by his friend Chauncey. It may be imagined that no great sympathy was likely to arise between Annersly and the Southern politician, and Ellsland, soon growing weary of his new acquaintance, drew Mavor aside to talk with him, as Chauncey's brother, of the prospects and merits of the future senator.

"Well, I wish him good fortune and all happiness," he said, "I hope it will not be long before he comes out again. He ought

to be, he might be the head of our party, but he is growing quite idle; and, moreover, I'm sorry to say he shirks expressing his views on the subject, which to my mind is the most important one of any."

"What! your theories about the duty of secession? Ah, well, I hope he will change his views on that," said Mavor, "it's his great mistake; pardon me, Ellsland, I know you think with him."

"And I know you don't: you ought to," replied Ellsland, undaunted. "If you think the North is too assuming, and that we are justified in resisting its insolence, why should you shrink from the idea of employing our natural right of self-government and independence, if the North drives us to it?"

"I will never tolerate the idea of leaving the Union though, for any logic," said Mavor; "and as for Chauncey, I hope he will begin to look after his own interests a little and leave the State to itself; his plantation won't pay its expenses soon. He has an overseer who has no idea of managing the hands, and they don't do a stroke more of work than they like; for-

tunately the fellow has discovered that he's not fit for his place, and he's going back to the North just in time, I trust, to save West Creek from ruin."

"Is he a fool or a cheat?" asked Ellsland. "I've seen him, but I can't tell which he is."

"A tender-hearted fool, can't hold the reins as he ought; he has found the weak side of Chauncey, and cants about his humanity, and Chauncey is unfortunately ready enough to be led by the fellow. Between them, they've allowed a nigger groom to get the upper hand of them both, and now he runs at large in the woods, talking with the other hands and teaching them to revolt against their master, and neither Chauncey nor Bland have the heart or spirit to hunt him down."

"How absurd! and worse than absurd. That fellow running loose will corrupt all the niggers on the place! I say, Mavor, shall we go and bring in this nigger, and have him broken in for Chauncey when he comes back?"

"Good thought, George! We will do it to-morrow, and have him tamed in a week."

"Not to-morrow; you have no dog that is worth anything, and we must have one good nose among us. That's a fine creature of Chauncey's, but he has no training. I have one I can rely on — he was out of the same litter as that dog of Chauncey's. We bought them at the same time, once when I was at West Creek, but I sent mine to John MacMurtagh to train him well for a nigger hunt, while this poor thing grew up as mild as Chauncey, and as inefficient as his overseer. But mine is a dog worth seeing. We'll put off the hunt till Thursday, and I'll send over for him, and then we shall see some sport. We must find a dozen fellows to help. What horses have you?"

"Well, we haven't a large choice at present, there are four in the stables. There's that ugly brute who did me a mischief last spring; I don't think I should fancy riding him, though I hear he is well broken in now. Chauncey sent him over to West Creek, and Bland, who, though he cannot manage niggers, can break a horse, has warranted him quiet and tractable. Eustace rides him often."

"If we send to the Creek, shall we get Firefly, think you?"

"No; I should not choose to send for him for such an occasion; he might get hurt, and Chauncey would not thank us for recovering the nigger for him, if we spoiled Firefly in doing it."

"Well, I'll send to my own place for a couple of horses then," said Ellsland. "I might have the colt I rode here, but he is not quick to the rein, and I should not like to meet a runaway nigger with a horse that I cannot depend upon; so now let's go and give our orders."

The two gentlemen wrote their notes, and sent off messengers to West Creek, and to Ellsland's plantation, for a reinforcement of horses and followers, for Ellsland wished his new overseer to be a witness of the hunt. They were in high spirits all the evening, but the next day, finding themselves dull (for they were unwilling to tire their horses previous to the next day's work, and the ladies were all occupied), Mavor proposed a walk to a neighbouring plantation, where he had met an overseer, whom he was in hopes to induce

Chauncey to engage after the departure of Stephen Bland. Ellsland willingly assented, and soon reaching their friend's house, they paid their respects to the ladies of the family, who received them with gracious smiles, though, as they left the verandah on their way to the field, one young lady exclaimed with a sigh of relief,

"Oh! what a real trouble to have to talk to them and to listen to all their nonsense. I suppose they can talk among themselves, but really there is not one who can find a thing to say to a woman, that any woman, at least that *I* care to hear."

"My dear child, they are two gentlemen of the best families, and most civil to us ladies. You must not expect them to be as full of books as you are who have just arrived from school," said her mother.

"Well, I am sure, mamma, I met gentlemen in New York who were quite as civil and yet had ideas beyond cotton and negroes, and who could talk to a lady upon some other subject besides flowers and dancing."

"There can be no comparison, nevertheless, instituted between a Southern gentleman and a Northern manufacturer," replied

her mother. "Ten years hence you will perhaps think differently from how you do at present. Go on with your German, my child; I must go and look after these tiresome servants." And with a sigh the mistress of the house took up a heavy bunch of house-keys from her work-basket, and went to distribute the stores, which she was obliged to keep carefully locked from the thieving fingers of her negro slaves.

The two planters had meanwhile reached the field where the hands were at labour, and stood watching a gang of negroes who were working with a celerity and regularity which excited their admiration, and Ellsland pronounced them to be under an overseer of first-rate abilities.

"The gang is a credit to you," he remarked to a man who stood leaning against a tree watching the negroes. "I have seldom seen a row finished with such regularity and precision."

The negroes of whom Ellsland spoke were a small gang detached from the labour in the cotton-field to repair a dyke which had given way and threatened to do mischief.

"It's not my gang, sir," said the man. "I am to have it when Mr. Bruce leaves here, and I just come over to see how he manages. They are a smart gang—fact; but I think he is wrong not to let them stop a minute now and then, and he don't moreover when they're hoeing or weeding. He'd ought to let them rest; it wastes time I know, and isn't smart, but I'm certain sure it saves the boys for three or four years longer, and that's a gain on the other hand. That's hard work, and tires the back awfully."

"Then you don't think him a good overseer?" said Mavor. "Mr. Warren is well satisfied with him, I believe."

"He knows what's good, sir, but he's strict, real strict; he knows when a gang looks handsome, and he keeps them up to it, no matter whether they can stand it or no; and he likes the whip too, sir. Now, there's a boy there," he continued, pointing to a young man who was working at the head of the gang with an activity that would have done credit even to a Northern labourer, "he is the best hand on the place, though he's not been here two months; he

was a gentleman's servant, and says he's never been whipped, and he hopes he never shall, and there's not a fault to find with him; though he looks so slight, he does the work of two men, and Mr. Bruce is always wanting to punish him; he says he's afraid he'll get too uppish."

"Isn't that a boy for Chauncey, eh, Mavor?" said Ellsland; "but it's a bad spirit to be among the niggers, it is."

"Mr. Bruce thinks so, sir," said the stranger overseer; "he says the boy is too uppish, and he'll let him know his place; but he can't find a fault on him; but he'll wear him out soon, for he sets him harder work every day, and Wallace will do it too, for he's set upon not getting whipped."

"I don't like that kind of nigger," said Ellsland.

"I do," replied Mavor, "if the fellow's decent and respectful with it all. Call him here."

"Very well, sir," said the future bailiff, and he raised his voice. The young man threw down his spade and advanced, hat in hand, to the two gentlemen. His slight figure seemed worn and attenuated with

toil, but his movements were brisk and active.

"Over sharp," muttered Ellsland, as he looked at his white complexion, his clear grey eyes, and the chestnut hair which hung in soft curls over his broad forehead.

"You work well, Wallace," said Mavor, kindly. "What did your master give for you?"

"Ten hundred dollars, mas'r, because I looked slight, but I think I'm worth more," said the quadroon, with a smile that was perhaps a little vain.

"Ah! I'm afraid I could not afford to give more for you though," said Mavor; "but you work very well. You may go back now;" and as Wallace returned to his work the planter observed, "Well, I see nothing particularly uppish in him; rather vain of his own merits, but that's a good fault."

"He's an impudent, high-spirited dog, sir," said Mr. Bruce, who had just come up. "He wants to know his place. Didn't you see how he hardly touched his hat at all? That's his pride, sir, that is. I understand he says I shan't whip him, but I'll show

him who's master—that's fact;" and Mavor and Ellsland had no sooner turned away than Mr. Bruce walked up to the quadroon, who was stooping over his work, and said in a sharp voice, "Mind yourself now, d—n you!"

Wallace looked up a little flushed, but replied submissively, "Yes, Mr. Bruce, what is it?"

"You impudent varmint! what? do you think you're not to touch your hat when you speak to me?" said the overseer, striking him sharply across the face with his cane. The slave's eyes flashed, but with a determined effort he controlled himself; but when Bruce, irritated at his defiant attitude, repeated the blow with angry oaths and curses, his patience gave way, and wresting the cane from his tyrant, he threw it to a distance, and stood still, awaiting with downcast eyes and folded arms, the overseer's vengeance. Mr. Bruce swore a volley of oaths and blasphemies, despatched a negro for his cowhide, and seizing a rope which lay near, he attempted to tie the slave's hands together. Wallace resisted, and slight as he was against the large and

powerful frame of the bailiff, his resolution gave him strength, and the other could not succeed in securing him. The struggle continued. Mavor and Ellsland, who saw it from a distance, were hastening to the assistance of the overseer, when Mr. Bruce drew a pistol from his pocket, placed it close to his antagonist's forehead, and the quadroon fell dead to the ground.

The report of the pistol was followed by a general silence; the two gentlemen stood in indignant amazement, while the negroes dropped their tools and looked at each other in consternation. The overseer who was visiting the plantation, hurried forward to the spot, saying, "I saw it would come to that. A thousand dollars gone at one slap! How will you account for it to your master, Mr. Bruce?"

"By ——, but he's a murderous fellow, and one I wouldn't trust with my property," said Ellsland.

"He's a perfect ruffian!" cried Mavor, striding towards the offender. "A cold-blooded, heartless scoundrel!"

"No, Mavor, he is over-hasty, but after all he couldn't help it," said Ellsland. "A

nigger like that must be conquered, and he has managed it badly, that's all."

"I hope, sir, you will tell Mr. Warren that I was not exceeding my duty," said Bruce, in a low voice, to Mavor.

"I shall do no such thing. I shall tell him you murdered the boy cruelly and wantonly," said Mavor warmly. "You may consider all arrangements with me at an end."

"Well, where are you going to, Mavor?" cried Ellsland, as his friend began to walk hurriedly away towards the house they had lately left. "You are not going to tell Warren—it's nonsense—it's waste of time. The hands will tell him soon enough."

"Yes, but I'll let him know how wilfully and wantonly the business was done; he wouldn't believe the hands against the overseer."

"And I tell you that Bruce had to uphold his own authority, and ought to be defended rather than blamed. What was one man to do, with ten or twelve niggers by? Warren will be angry enough as it is. No, you shall not go to him, Mavor, that's flat. Come home with me."

"And when I think that is the man I was looking out for Chauncey!" said Mavor, as he reluctantly acquiesced with his friend's reasons. "The wretch! why, Chauncey would have to discharge him in a week."

"I trust not," said Ellsland, laughing; "I rather calculate he would manage Chauncey's niggers better than Bland. But come, is there no tavern near? I am deucedly thirsty."

"Yes, half a mile further. I should like a cocktail myself, and I expect we may find a few fellows to help run down the nigger to-morrow."

"How many horses shall we muster?" said Ellsland, as they sipped their spirits.

"Why, we can find six saddle horses, and I have sent to the Creek for what they can raise; your man can bring two, and maybe we can mount some one on the carriage horses if need must. That will be seven — nine — twelve horses, and we are three, and your overseer and my man; we can have a good company. Are there any fellows here whom you could depend on for a nigger hunt?" he asked the landlord of the house.

"You ain't fur wrong, Sir," replied the man; "there's myself and my son, I calculate, and I could find three or four other chaps, I s'pose, if you have the beasts."

"Bring them by eight o'clock to-morrow morning then, and say they shall have five dollars a-piece, and I will stand treat for them here." The tavern-keeper looked gratified, and Ellsland, by way of further pleasing him, ordered another two glasses for himself and friend. The gentlemen walked home slowly, and finding the luncheon already dismissed, sent for some more spirits, and refreshed themselves in the library.

Mr. Annersly looked in upon them, but found them too merry to suit his taste as companions, and went out for a solitary walk. He was in no humour to enjoy lively conversation, even had they been sober, for his mind was painfully occupied. He was thinking much of Constance, and though he liked and admired Chauncey Burgoyne extremely, he felt great misgivings for his sister's future happiness. His anxiety for Irene's safety had opened his eyes painfully to the peculiar workings of slavery, and he had not been a fortnight

in a Southern household without seeing enough to make him deeply regret that his sister should ever become the mistress of one and the wife of a slaveholder. Added to this uneasiness Charles was somewhat depressed by the annihilation of all his hopes of Irene's affection; his joy at knowing her safe was tempered by his own disappointment, and he blamed himself severely for wishing, as he could not help doing, that Maxwell had proved a "sneak," and left the field open to him. It was a matter of little consideration to him that his sister's new relatives and friends would consider his marriage with a girl who was disgraced by the fatal stigma of colour an insult to Constance and them. That any term of reproach could be applied to her, his sweet, his peerless Irene, was a thought that sent the blood faster through his veins, and made him curse alike the cruel system and the men by whom it was sustained in the face of civilised Europe. He had moreover begun to learn, through his many cautious inquiries, that the treatment Irene had received at the plantation was not by any means so gentle as he had been led to sup-

pose, and that she had been placed among the other servants, and shared their labour and their poor accommodation. He was in no humour to meet his friends graciously, when he saw them coming towards him both evidently much the worse for the spirits they had been enjoying.

CHAPTER VI.

"We have got something to tell you, Mr. Annersly," said Ellsland, hiccuping as he spoke, and steadying himself by the railing he was passing. "We are to have another wedding here."

"Indeed! and how soon?" demanded Annersley in surprise.

"Oh, not yet—not—not—not for twelve months, perhaps. Miss Burgoyne is going to marry Edward Benson; a fine fellow he is—very fine fellow—exceedingly fine fellow."

"I suppose Mrs. Burgoyne is much pleased with the arrangement," said Charles, turning away in disgust from Ellsland, and addressing Mavor, who, though equally intoxicated and more excited, was less overpowered by his potations than his friend.

"So, so; no, mamma's not at all pleased about it; she thinks Lucy's too young to

make a choice yet," replied Mavor, who was inclined to be confidential. "But he's a good fellow, and it's a good estate, and a first-rate connection. Besides, the wedding will not take place for twelve months, so there's no hurry yet."

"Why don't those black dogs bring the horses, d—n them!" said Ellsland, moving slowly toward the avenue. "It's getting dark, and the beasts won't have time to rest for the morning."

"I think they are coming, sir; I hear the horses," observed Mr. Henning, whose hearing was quicker than that of the gentlemen. "They are galloping."

"Galloping! the black devil! He shall catch it then. Ah! they've stopped now."

"Yes, sir, but he'll ride the horses up here quietly enough, you will see."

"He's on Firefly!" exclaimed Mavor in indignation, as Jonas appeared in the avenue riding Chauncey's favourite horse, and leading the others, but now at a quiet and sober pace. Mavor waited until he had dismounted close to him, and then, seizing him fiercely, cried,

"How dare you get on the beast, you

impudent dog? You have galloped him too. You shall smart for it!"

Jonas denied that he had galloped the horse more than a hundred yards, but the steaming sides of the animal belied his assertions, and his master, striking him over the head with his cane, swore he would treat him as he deserved. "Take the horses to the stable, Henning, and see them well rubbed down, poor things! I'll teach the nigger to treat my horses in that way."

Ellsland produced from his pocket a leathern thong, tied the slave's hands, and secured him to the railing, while Mavor commenced his castigation by repeated blows with his rattan on the back and shoulders of the delinquent. Had he been sober he would have remembered Mr. Annersly's presence, and deferred the whipping for another hour, but he now vented his anger upon Jonas without paying the least attention to Charles. Annersly did not begin to plead for the criminal till he thought he had received sufficient punishment, but his remonstrances were disregarded, and unwilling to remain longer a spectator of the scene, he turned away and

left the place. He did not see Mr. Henning returning in hot haste towards his employers.

"What is it, Henning? Any mischief happened to the horse?" said Mavor, alarmed by the overseer's evident excitement.

"I fear there is, sir; Firefly is lame—dead lame; and I'm afraid he won't get over it."

"What! Firefly lamed!" exclaimed Mavor, with a fierce oath. "Firefly lamed! I'll pay the rascal for it, I will! Fetch the cowhide, Henning, this instant;" and snatching up his cane again, he struck blow after blow over the mulatto's head.

"Poor Firefly! and Chauncey values him even more than he's worth," said Ellsland. "Harder yet, Mavor! give it the dog well, as he deserves. Here, let me have it, and give the rope a second twist."

Mavor tightened the thong and secured the writhing slave still closer to the railings, while Henning returned with the cowhide.

"The beast is dead lame; quite ruined, I fear, sir."

"I'll pay him for it, by ——!" said Mavor. "Here, take my gloves and give me the whip, Henning."

"Oh, mas'r! dear mas'r! for mercy's sake! oh, let me off this once!" cried the slave, as he saw the preparations for his torture. His entreaties were unheeded. Mavor swung the heavy cowhide in the air, and brought it down on the mulatto's shoulders with all his force, and the slave shrieked in agony. Again and again the stroke descended, till Mavor, tired with his exertions, surrendered the whip to Ellsland, who plied it with still greater vigour. Jonas's cotton shirt was cut to pieces and soaked in blood, and still lash after lash was given with unremitting fury, until Henning, who, though no enemy to flogging, had too much regard for his master's property to let the man "be entirely spoiled," interfered, and by representing to the gentlemen the great press of work at that time, at last persuaded them to desist and let the offender off for the present. Indeed, the slave was too much injured to stand, and he had to be carried by Henning and a negro to the quarters, where Colonel Bur-

goyne and his English guests accidentally met them.

Annersly turned away in sickening horror from the cut and mangled body, and without trusting himself to speak to his companion, walked away from the quarters. His whole soul rose up within him in burning indignation, and conscious he could not overcome or forget his disgust, he resolved to leave the plantation the next day. He had no wish to quarrel with Mavor, as Constance had chosen such a brother (what a brother!), but nothing should induce him to remain longer at a house where such a scene could meet his eyes.

Colonel Burgoyne did not seek to follow his guest; he remained to hear Henning's explanation of Jonas's punishment.

"What am I to do with him?" said the planter, as if speaking to himself. "Mavor will kill him next time, and I cannot be sure of being here to save him."

"You had better sell him, sir; he'll be fit to move in a fortnight," suggested the overseer.

"I don't want to sell him," replied the

Colonel. "He is a good servant, and he has a wife and child."

"Well, sir, another cutting up like this will settle him as a good servant," remarked Mr. Henning. Colonel Burgoyne made no answer, but remained looking at the mulatto with some expression of grief and regret. He had an old reminiscence of having caressed him when he was a child; and he had promised the boy's mother that he would neither sell her nor her child. Her sale had been effected by Mrs. Burgoyne when her husband was away, and now the Colonel saw the only way to protect the son's life was to send him likewise to another master.

"It will be a dead loss if he should die after another whipping, you know, sir," said Henning; "and now you may get one thousand dollars for him, or eight hundred, perhaps, as it's after this beating."

"But who would give that for him now, or how can he be got away from here? He won't be fit to tramp after a trader for these three weeks. No one would buy him, all sore as he is."

"He'll be coming round in a fortnight,"

said the overseer; "and I know a man near here who would buy him, and he will take him in a wagon, too, for he will have one for a girl who has got a baby a day or two old now, and whom he's taking south. He'll wait a bit about here, I calculate, and he would take Jonas; so if you like, sir, I'll go to him about the boy."

"No, no; I'll see to him myself," said Colonel Burgoyne. "You look to the boy, Henning, and see that his back is properly attended to;" and the Colonel returned to the house.

Mr. Annersly found it impossible to forget the scene he had witnessed, even in sleep. It was long, indeed, before he could close his eyes, for he kept wondering whether similar cruelties were ever to happen at West Creek, when his sister should lose her present all-powerful influence over Chauncey. The sleep which followed these reflections was uneasy, and harassed by painful dreams; and it was with a sense of relief that he woke in the morning, startled from his slumber by the sound of many voices under his window.

The hunt was assembling. Three or

four men of the shabby-genteel class, known in the Southern states as poor whites, had been collected by the tavern-keeper, and were glorying in the unusual privilege of mounting horses, and all was in readiness when Mavor appeared at the door drawing on his gloves, and presently Ellsland and young Benson, the happy lover of Lucy, joined him with Eustace.

"We have a first-rate morning—quite a cool day," observed Ellsland; while Benson bowed to a window where Mrs. Burgoyne, in an elegant morning toilette, stood watching their departure. She was anxious to give Eustace a word of caution about his riding.

"Take care of him, Mavor; remember he is on the wretched horse that threw you."

"I'll look after him, mamma; and the horse is as gentle as a lamb now. Good-bye; you will see us all by dinner-time. Don't hold the reins so tight, Eustace; now then, that will do; we may be off."

As soon as the hunters were out of sight, Mr. Annersly, who had carefully avoided meeting Mavor Burgoyne on the preceding

evening, descended to the breakfast-room, and informed his host and hostess that he was obliged to leave them; and after resisting kind entreaties that he would stay longer, he took leave with many thanks for their hospitality, and, more prejudiced against the slave-holding system than ever, took his way to Charleston, where he intended to remain until the appointed time when he should join his sister and her husband in Georgia.

Colonel Burgoyne accompanied his guest as far as Madison, and on his return homeward drove down a short forest road to a rough log shanty, where he found the trader whom Henning had recommended to him. "I don't want to sell the boy," he said to himself as he drove along, "but I must do it; it will be really kinder to him, for Mavor will kill him one of these days; he is quite a tiger when he is roused. No, it cannot be helped;" and leaving his carriage at a little distance, the Colonel entered the shanty and commenced negotiations with the trader.

"And I shall want you to find him a really good master; one like myself, you

know; and I shall expect to know his name. I can give you a letter telling any gentleman that he is sold for no fault whatever."

"Wal, you must, indeed, Colonel, for folks are shy of buying niggers as is so well cut up, you know. But now as to the eight hun'rd dollars. I can't give it, or anything like, for the fellow."

"He's worth it, though; he'll be all sound again in a few weeks, and I would not sell him for less," replied Colonel Burgoyne, decidedly.

"Eight hun'rd then; but I can't pay down the cash—I can't, but if you like to take a prime hand from me, we'll fix it."

"Let me see the boy," said the Colonel, and the trader called in and showed off to its best advantage a first-rate article; "nearly black—strong as a horse, and worth twelve hundred dollars if he was worth a cent."

Colonel Burgoyne demurred; he did not himself want to pay any cash either, but to gain an equivalent for Jonas.

"Haven't you, maybe, a baby or two;

a child as would fetch up the differ', now?"

"Yes, I have,—three years old; bright boy and healthy; worth three hundred dollars and over."

"I wouldn't give you three hun'rd for him, though, say two hun'rd and seventy, though, and p'raps you've some corn barrels or hogs, as would make the bargain up."

"No, I've nothing but what I shall want for my hands this season. I must leave them enough."

"Lor! the hands will do well enough; if there's less for them they eats less, that's all. Then it's settled, sir, and I'll come over the last day I'm here and fetch away the nigger. But I guess I can sell the papoose at once, so I'll come and fetch it to-morrow, with your leave, Colonel."

"Do so, then," said Colonel Burgoyne, and he drove home.

An hour later the trader was startled from his cigar and reflections by the approach of the hunters, who stopped their cavalcade opposite the little shanty, and Mavor asked if he could sell them anything

to drink. The party were all highly elated, the chase had been successful, and the fugitive sullen and bleeding, was firmly secured by cords to a horse. He knew what he had to expect, and had fought hard with his pursuers, seeking death rather than capture, but numbers had prevailed, and he was now helpless.

"I'm a trader in niggers, sir, and don't sell rum," was the unwelcome reply to Mavor's question.

"But surely you have a little that you keep for yourself? Come, out with it — make your shanty a tavern, and name your own prices. Only let us have something."

The trader had, as the gentleman divined, a little stock of spirits for his own private consumption, and this was soon served out among the tired riders.

"Have you any niggers to sell, sir?" asked the driver.

"Not to-day."

"Better think again, sir; ha'n't you a boy or two to dispose of? I can give a fair price, you see, because I'm going South at once."

"No; I have not any to sell," replied Mavor, counting out the money in payment for their refreshment, and putting himself once more at the head of the party, he rode on.

Ellsland soon rode up alongside, and asked, "How is it you never have any to sell, Mavor? You buy for your father often enough. Doesn't he like selling?"

"Oh, he don't mind it so long as I leave it all to him. I may buy as I think fit, but he keeps the power of selling in his own hands," replied Mavor. There was a slight tone of dissatisfaction in his voice, and his friend observed—

"Well, I think it's a downright pity you should stop here, and help him overlook an overseer who does well enough. Why don't you work the farm he has in Missouri? It would be much better for your father if you took charge of that for him, instead of his hiring it and his niggers to folks who let them die off, as that woman Sprague did last year."

"Well, I have thought about it, more especially since I have been over in Missouri," replied Mavor; "but I don't care

to leave South Carolina. I think it would be wiser to sell the land out and out, for it's no good holding it to lease out. If I can get my father to think with me, I shall go to Missouri and find a purchaser."

"Do so. Come now with me. I'm going there."

"You are? When?"

"Now, directly; next week or that after."

"Impossible, George! You said you would not leave home till the work was all over."

"So I did, but I see my new man will manage well, and I too have business I ought to see to; and besides, I think I shall stretch on and see what the rebels in Kansas are doing. I have a notion that our people want shepherding up, and that the Free-soilers are growing too bold; having their own way too much. Now I do wish, Mavor, you could spare time to come too; you might see whether you liked Missouri or whether you can sell the farm well."

"Well, George, perhaps I shall come. I will think about it, I don't think the idea

is a bad one, and I'll give you my answer in a day or two."

"Well, I shall be off, if I can manage it, next week," said Ellsland, and as Benson joined them he changed the conversation.

CHAPTER VII.

The trader came over to see Jonas two days afterwards, and though the overseer took care not to inform the slave that he was to be sold, lest, as he said, he might be sulky and not get on well, Jonas took the alarm, and sent his wife out to ask his master if he were going to sell him. Colonel Burgoyne happened to be standing with the trader in the negro quarters, and, unwilling to answer the woman and hear her lamentations and entreaties, he ordered her to remain outside, while he himself entered the hut.

"Mas'r, dear mas'r, you're not a goin' to sell me, are you?" exclaimed Jonas, raising himself as well as he could from the mattress where he lay, and clasping his hands in agony.

Colonel Burgoyne regretted that he had come in, but he was obliged to reply now.

"Yes, I am going to send you to a very good master, Jonas, and I hope you will show him you can be a good servant."

"Oh, mas'r, mas'r, you promised never to sell me — you promised!" said the mulatto, earnestly; "and Susy's got a baby now. Oh, don't send me away from the old place! Dear, dear mas'r, I know I've done wrong and deserved the cutting up I've got, but I'll be a good servant always, only don't send me away from you."

"It can't be helped now, boy," said his master, "but I've told the trader to find you a good place."

"Mas'r, dear mas'r, do you remember—"

"Remember what?" said the Colonel, angrily, for Jonas had stopped, overcome with choking emotion.

"Don't you remember when Mr. Chauncey took up his knife and went to fight Mr. Mavor, I ran to him and dragged him away, and you said I had saved Mr. Mavor's life then? Oh, mas'r, don't send me away from the old place, and the baby and Susy!"

"I must do it, Jonas, it cannot be helped. I do it in kindness, boy; I know what is

best for you," replied the Colonel, hastily, and he turned away and left the hut.

The trader told Henning he was to have a child as well as Jonas in exchange for the stout negro he had brought to the plantation, and Henning pointed to Clara's eldest boy, who the Colonel had already informed him was to be parted with on the present occasion.

"I'll take him with me now, then," said the trader; "I have my wagon here; just put him in, and I'll be off. I'll be along in a fortnight again, and take off that nigger, if he can get about then, I calculate."

"Take the brat, then," said Henning; but as he spoke the child's mother arrived breathless at the place. Another woman had hurried to call her, and she reached the spot just as the overseer was lifting the child into the cart. With a shriek of terror she snatched the boy from his arms, and, regardless of his oaths and threats, rushed towards the house to find, if possible, a friend there. That friend was Mavor, and she appealed to him in agony.

"Oh, mas'r, dear!" she cried, in a broken and trembling voice, as she sank on the

ground, embracing his knees. "Don't you remember how you lay tossing and moaning when the fever took you, and I was by you night and day, and you said you would always take care of my poor child? You will not let him be sold, you will not? Ah! look how pretty he is, and his eyes so like yours, dear mas'r."

"I don't want to sell him, Clara, don't fear," said Mavor, much moved; "I told you I would not."

"But master does; he says so."

"He shall not, I promise you, child," said Mavor, quickly.

"But I have sold him already, Mavor; and, remember, he's my property, not yours," said Colonel Burgoyne, who came up at that instant.

"You have sold him, sir! I have promised the girl he shall be kept," said his son, hastily and angrily.

"Yes, but as the girl happens not to be yours to promise to, you need not trouble yourself on the subject," returned the Colonel, coolly.

Clara could hear no more of her masters' discussion; she saw that both were ex-

tremely angry, and she trusted that Mavor would prevail; but after a few minutes he came back and said:

"I can do nothing, Clara; he must go. I am very sorry, but don't cry, my girl; I'll get him back for you. I'll tell the trader to take good care of him, and remember whom he sells him to, and I will get him back for you. Only, mind, you must not make a fuss now," he added; and the agonised mother, recalled to self-command by the hope of recovering her child, controlled her agitation, and merely saying, "I will carry him to the gate, mayn't I, mas'r? and the cart will catch me there," she lifted the boy again in her arms, and for the last time carried him down the avenue, followed by the little wagon in which the trader sat.

She remained at the gate until she could no longer see the cart, and then returned, tearless, speechless, to the negro quarters. Her companions had gone back to the field; she went to her hut. Henning saw it was no use to recall her to her work. When the negro Jim returned from his labour late in the evening, he found her still lying on the ground, her face hidden in her hands.

He sat down by her, and tried to comfort her.

"Look up, girl, look up, and don't take on so. Now don't, Clara, girl. You've one child left still—you have."

There was no answer, and, after waiting a minute, Jim continued: "Now don't fret. I know it's nature, but don't, Clara. Johnny was a bright chap, and them as bought him will be kind to the boy; he'll be taken good care on."

"Taken good care on," said Clara, raising herself from the ground; "taken care of — oh! what do you know of what a child like him wants — a baby away from his mother? Who'll see that he gets food enough, and isn't driven away from the trough by the other children? Who'll get him water in the long hot days? There's none to do it. There'll be no one to mend his little clothes — to wrap him in his blanket these cold winter nights; there'll be no one to hold him near to her and keep him warm. I had both him and baby up against me last night, and I warmed their feet when they were so cold; and now, who is there to let him come to the fire and

make a place for him, or keep it alight in the night while he lies awake crying with the cold? Oh! my poor boy, my poor baby!"

"Some one will look arter him, be sure," suggested Jim; "there is most ways some old woman to tend to them little ones."

"And if his feet gash in the cold, who will look to 'em?" continued the mother; "when the sores smart with the cold, who will bind 'em up? And when he gets older they'll set him to work, and he will have no mother to beg him off from a beating, to do his work for him if he can't finish it, to teach him how to manage. Oh! suppose he wakes crying in the dark, as he does, and no one near him — no one to let him lie near them or speak to him — oh! my child, my child!"

Her tears came at last; the image of her poor child now lying awake, terrified in the darkness, brought them, and she wept convulsively; her remaining child came to her, and nestled in her lap. Jim tried again to say something.

"Well, perhaps it's as well away there as it would be here. Look at Letta, how she

goes about like a ghost, thinking of her baby that's dead, and afraid that the other one should be taken when she's away; the young missis ——"

"You think he's sold it to please her — to please Madam Eleanor? You think my baby is sold away from me because *she* has asked it?" cried Clara, in agony. "Oh, may the Lord curse her! curse her, cruel wicked woman! curse her! But why mine? why was my boy taken? what had he done? why is not Letta sent away? why doesn't Madam Eleanor send her child off? Why mine? oh! why mine?"

"Be quiet, Clara — be still, girl," interposed Jim; "don't be so mad, now. Perhaps Letta's boy will go too—perhaps he'll be sent to the soul-drivers 'fore long. They say another young un's got to go."

A faint shriek from the doorway startled Jim; he turned and saw he had been overheard, and by Letta herself. Her lips were open, her fingers were clenched, and her countenance white and livid.

"Lord a mercy! I didn't think you was here, Letta, girl," said Jim, as he rose and came forward with unaffected concern. He

took her hand and led her from the hut out of Clara's hearing; the colour came back to her face as, with a voice shrill with agony, she cried, "Tell me, tell it me! you've heard it. What, oh! what did they say? *My* child, my darling — will they take him from me? They shall not, they cannot— I——"

"Letta, child, be still: they ain't goin' to. I didn't hear it from any one but Sally, and she didn't mean anything by it. She said she shouldn't be s'prised if your boy were the next, but, Lord bless you, girl, there's nothing in it. I was only trying to comfort Clara, poor soul!"

"They shall not! Jim, you are not telling me the truth, but you may—I can hear it. Tell it me, oh! tell it me quick. When do they mean to come for him? Oh! tell me all about it—do, oh! do."

"I didn't mean to say it, Letta; it ain't true. They isn't going to sell him, that I knows on," replied the sympathising negro hurriedly, "they ain't going."

"They will, they are going! Oh! I know it," cried Letta, wringing her hands, and before he could speak again, she burst from

him, and darted down the slope away from the hut. She crossed the brook, hardly knowing where she went, but running instinctively towards the house, and, wild with her terror and agony, unconscious that she was approaching any one till she almost ran against a man. It was Mavor, who was crossing the field to Henning's house.

"Hey, girl! what, Letta? what are you here for? Go back to the house. Did your mistress give you leave to be out?"

"Master," said Letta, with sudden energy, "you are going to sell my child away—sell him to the traders. You shall not do it—you shall not dare. If you sell him, you must sell me. I won't live if he goes. I won't live a day after Charlie goes. I've had one child murdered already."

"What's the matter, girl?" said Mavor, looking fixedly at her as he saw her flashing eyes, and noted the strange expression of her face as her agitation still increased whilst he spoke. "I never said I was going to sell him, and I am not going to. What's the matter?"

"You shall not sell him, not unless you sell me with him. You shall not, master:

you shall not dare. I don't mind dying, I won't live here. My baby died, and I know how it died; and if you sell my Charlie, master, I tell you—I tell you," she added, sinking her voice to a hoarse whisper, "I'll be revenged on her baby—Madam Eleanor's baby. I will kill it—I can—as mine was killed in its sleep, if my Charlie goes."

"Letta, you are mad, girl," said Mavor, startled and alarmed by her wild threats; but he spoke quietly, anxious to soothe her, and moreover there was that in her words to arrest his attention and make him desirous to understand their import.

"You are talking nonsense, you do not know what you have said," he answered, calmly; "you had better go back to your work. Your mistress is waiting for you."

Letta seemed to awaken out of a dream: she looked round in doubt for a moment, and then, as she saw Mavor's gathering frown, she replied hurriedly:

"Please, master, I don't know what I've said, please."

Mavor had no wish to remind her of the terrible threats she had just uttered, but he

dared not leave the mystery uncleared up. "You said some one had killed your baby," he said coldly; "you are a fool, Letta. What did you mean?"

Letta was silent. Her colour rose, her lips moved, but no sound escaped them, and dropping a curtsey she was turning away; but Mavor stopped her, laying his cane on her arm, and, speaking in a stern voice, continued:

"You meant something. You said your baby was killed. Who killed it? You did not do it, hey? Speak! I will know. You must tell the truth now, or I'll have you whipped for falsehood-telling."

"Master, do you really want to know it all?" said Letta, in a low whisper. "Better not; you won't believe me if I tell you, and you will have me whipped for saying it, perhaps."

"No, I will not; tell me the truth," replied Mavor, but he started back with a cry of horror as she faltered out:

"Please, master, it was Madam Eleanor did it."

"You lie, you lie, you impudent cursed minx, you lie!" he exclaimed, trembling as

he spoke. "Unsay what you've said, or by the Eternal——"

"Master, I do not lie," replied Letta firmly; "before God, I do not. I will tell you it all, and you will see I speak the truth. Shall I tell you?"

"Go on," said Mavor hoarsely, and Letta continued; but all traces of her former wild excitement had vanished from her countenance, and she spoke with the fearful calmness of truth, while she told him of the strange, sudden manner of her baby's death; Hester's discovery that the phial of laudanum was gone from its accustomed place in Eleanor's room, the strange mutterings and expressions of Eleanor herself during her illness, and the subsequent finding of the bottle amongst the bushes outside the windows of the room that Letta had occupied with her infant. The label still adhered to one of the broken fragments; it was read by Hargrave, and confirmed the suspicions of the slaves, who had long perceived Eleanor's growing jealousy of Letta, and formed dark surmises as to the strange malady that had destroyed the infant. Letta told her tale under her breath, but

quickly and unhesitatingly, and as she concluded she added, in a low voice that betrayed neither shade of irresolution nor fear of consequences:

"I don't want to hurt her nor her baby, if she lets mine alone; but if you sell him, master, I will kill hers—I will, though I die for it."

"Letta, Letta, you are mad, child," cried Mavor, forcing a loud laugh, though his blood ran chill through his veins. "Go home, girl, and don't fear—I won't take him from you; go home and be quiet. You don't know what you are saying. Go home," and Letta, dropping a hasty curtsey, hurried away, while her master stood motionless in speechless horror. After a few moments he roused himself, and walked hastily towards the house.

"Eleanor, Eleanor, is it true—my Eleanor?" he asked himself in bewildered dismay. "Well may you be in terror for our darling boy. Were you a fiend? were you mad. But, good heavens! not a day must be lost, or that girl may make her cursed threat real, and our child——Oh, this is terrible. I must see Eleanor at once;"

and pale and cold, but with large drops of moisture standing on his forehead, Mavor strode into the sitting-room, where his wife, with the rest of the family, was waiting for him at supper. He felt himself unable to command his voice, but, beckoning her to follow, left the apartment as soon as he had caught her eye. Eleanor rose instantly, terrified at the unexpected summons and his visible agitation. She hurried after him up the staircase, and, gasping for breath, asked in a whisper, as she overtook him at the door of her own room :

"The child—the child! Mavor, what is it?"

"Nothing is amiss with it; ah, you may well fear mischief for it," he answered, as he followed her into her own room. "Are you afraid of our boy being served as you did another's? If the mischief you fear were to happen to him, it would be your doing," he added. Eleanor looked up at him for a moment in doubt and amazement, and then, covering her face with her hands, sank giddy and faint on the sofa.

The painful scene, the bitter recrimina-

tion that followed, may be imagined, but is not for us to relate.

"Yes, I'll send her away fast enough, poor girl," said Mavor, as he turned from the room at last. "I'll not have my child murdered by her. Poor Letta may go away to strangers. You may feel safe when you hold your baby in your arms, and remember the poor little thing you destroyed, and its poor mother too, who loved it as you love yours. Eleanor, Eleanor! you so gentle, so loving, as you once were! No, you had no justification for it. You are no worse off than other women; but what other woman could have done as you have? You say you would have been happier if you had never known me; then you may be happy now, if you can, while I am gone. Oh! how is it that I can know this of you, and not be mad?"

"Mavor, Mavor, don't leave me yet; say what you will, but stay a moment longer," cried his wife, clinging in agony to his arm as he turned away.

"No, I have letters to write, and business to see to. I shall be gone before you are up in the morning. Good-bye; I am

going to Ellsland now. You need have no fear of that girl — she shall be sold at whatever loss;" and disengaging his arm from her hand, he went to his own study, and shut himself in there, while his wife, clasping both hands tightly over her heart, fell back, pale and almost senseless, in the arm-chair by the cradle of her infant.

The next morning Mavor left the house, and went to his friend George Ellsland. He spoke with his wife for a few moments before going, and his mother saw with dismay the deep frown on his brow as he came from her, and judged that a serious quarrel was the cause of his departure.

Eleanor, however, refused all comfort and sympathy. She forced herself to wear a placid countenance amongst her relations, but she sat alone by the little bed of her child for many hours both of day and night. The wretched and injured wife could admit no sympathiser or friend to her misery; oppressed at once by remorse for her crime and the certainty of having widened the breach between herself and her husband, she could only cry over her baby and trust and long for Mavor's return. A letter from

him to the trader empowered him to take Letta and her child at his own price, and a few days after they were gone, Mavor returned to the plantation—not to stay, however. He had persuaded his father to intrust the sale of the Missouri farm to him, and, disregarding Eleanor's distress, he left again immediately, and accompanied Ellsland to the West.

Another member of the family had left Chestnut Brook some days previously.

Colonel Burgoyne was much irritated by Mavor's interference in behalf of Clara's child, and walked away from him, already disposed to quarrel with the first person he met. This happened to be Eustace, who was in the stable-yard in ecstasies over a wicker basket containing a large gamecock which had just arrived from Madison.

"What is that for?" demanded his father, sharply.

"It's my new bird, Sir; guess what I've paid for him. He is a bargain. I'm going to match him against Tom Bilton's bird, Miltiades, next Thursday. He is coming here with his birds."

"Don't imagine that I shall permit any-

thing of the kind, Eustace," said Colonel Burgoyne, interrupting his bright anticipations. "At least I will have my sons gentlemen."

"It's an amusement, Sir, that is suitable for any gentleman; everybody says so, and I think so myself."

"It's not for you to think or say anything about it," said his father.

"I think what I like, and I say what I think," muttered the young American. "The first gentlemen patronise cock-fighting, sir; I saw plenty of it at Adrian's house."

"Well, it shall not be seen in mine," replied the Colonel, giving the hamper a kick which turned it and its occupant upside down on the gravel. "I will not have this low, vulgar pursuit on my plantation, I tell you."

"Then I'll go to Adrianville, and tell Bilton to meet me there," replied Eustace, lifting up the hamper and walking off indignantly; and the next morning he informed his mother that he was going to spend a fortnight with his friend. Mrs. Burgoyne expostulated, and entreated him

to stay, but in vain; and he left the house while his father was still in the field, and rode to Adrianville. He found his friend at the door, preparing to mount his own horse.

"Why, Eustace, welcome! What brings you here? but I can give you but a sorry reception, for I am off to Ilion, and you must come too, for there is a bull to be baited, and a large sale of darkies. Will you come?"

"Willingly," said Eustace; "I must just see this bird fed and littered down first, and then I will be with you."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Annersly remained in Charleston some weeks before he joined his friends in Georgia. He said nothing to Constance of the circumstances which had induced him to leave Chestnut Brook, and only trusted he should not see a repetition of the same scenes during his stay at Mr. Tarleton's plantation. Two days after he joined them, that gentleman came to meet his friends, and they set off together to his plantation. Tarleton had sent his own carriage and horses to meet them on the way,— a wise precaution, as the deep sandy road soon tired out the cattle with which they started, for his estate was nearly twenty miles from any town of importance. Their road lay through thick woods, stretching for many miles on towards the sea, through the swamps and marshes which bordered the course of a little river, where Mr. Tarleton

assured the Englishman he could show him some splendid specimens of alligators if, Englishman-like, he had a fancy for seeing something horrid. The Georgian gentleman was very proud of the woodland through which they drove, and was anxious that his friends should appreciate it also. At another season of the year they might have found the long straight road through a flat country dull and monotonous, but the many different tints of the oaks and maples mingling with the dark pine trees relieved the woods from all charge of sameness.

"Does not this long straight avenue, with its end always apparently in view, and yet ever going on, remind you of the road by which we travelled, Conny, in the Pontine Marshes long ago?" said Charles to his sister. She smiled, for Chauncey had already made the same observation to her, and he and she had been lost for some moments in delightful anticipation of their approaching journey to a country they had each separately seen, and now were to revisit together.

"Well, I am glad at least that I have secured you here before you go," said Mr.

Tarleton, after their intended journey to Italy had been for some time the subject of conversation; "but I have not shown you all the fine views in this part yet, and some day I must take you, Chauncey, a long excursion to see a favourite spot of mine. It's worth seeing, I can tell you; quite as good as anything you'll find in your travels, I believe."

This excursion was proposed again by Mr. Tarleton after his guests had been three or four days with him, and Chauncey readily welcomed the idea.

"But unfortunately it is quite an impossible journey for Mrs. Burgoyne. No carriage can go the road," said Tarleton.

"That need be no obstacle," Chauncey replied. Constance was quite ready to accompany them on horseback; but his friend said that he meant to take a very long circuit, and he feared it would prove too fatiguing an expedition for any lady.

"Then they may go without me," said Chauncey to Constance; "it would be the first ride I have taken without you now for many weeks; I should not enjoy it at all; and I see no good reason for taking a forty

mile circuit. We might ride to the two places on different days."

"Oh, go with Mr. Tarleton; he is resolved upon it," said Constance. "You and I will ride over afterwards and see the place, if you find it worth the ride. I trust he only says forty miles to frighten me, for it is too severe a fatigue for Charles and you when there is no necessity."

"Oh, yes, forty miles must be an overstatement. No; we shall be out all the day, and I don't want to leave you. But since you have accepted it for me——"

"You will go, and that is what I wanted. I shall be writing letters all the day," said Constance; "I owe letters to mamma and Eleanor both."

The three gentlemen mounted their horses early in the morning, and, on leaving the main road, plunged into the woods.

"We have a long ride before us," observed Mr. Tarleton. "Now, Chauncey, I am glad to see you at last riding on this road that I have so often promised myself the pleasure of showing you."

"You do not forgive me, nor do I deserve forgiveness, for my delay in answering your

kind invitations here," replied Chauncey. "I am glad to be here also; but as to the road, when the mist lifts I shall be able to give you a better opinion of it. At present, all I know is that it is worse footing than even our roads at home."

"Oh, I was once pretty well worn out, and my poor horse too, on this path one day last spring," said Mr. Tarleton. "I had been out all day, and I suddenly found myself in the smoke of a fire. It was out on the right over there, and it was burning four days too. I knew it was not near me, because I could breathe easily enough, but I began to fear I should never find the way. I was riding for hours in that smoke fog, and I should have missed the turn at last, had not some of my people come out to look for me. Now the mist is lifting—just in time, for here is one of the pictures I have for you. I think we might bring Mrs. Burgoyne as far as this; it's worth coming to see, though it's nothing to the next."

"It is indeed beautiful," said Chauncey; "it would be worth a longer ride than this."

They found themselves on the banks of a deep but narrow river running sluggishly

to the sea; it was dark and black with the shadow of the trees under which they stood. The fog had cleared, and further on, where the bright sunshine fell through the broader opening, the water was gay with the reflection of all the red and yellow tints of autumn from the chestnut-oaks and beeches which fringed its banks, and amongst whose branches the mist was breaking the rays of the sun into long lines of dim and silvery light. A portion of the bank near their path had given way, and three tall maples had fallen into the water, their dead leaves replaced by the wild vines and other creepers which hung over their branches, even more beautiful in their withered autumn hues than in the dark green of summer. On to this little breakwater Tarleton conducted his friends, that their view might be uninterrupted by the branches that trailed from the banks into the stream; and here, as from an island, the river before and behind them lay like a quiet lake among the noble trees which seemed to spring out from the very waters.

Chauncey stood in silent ecstasy looking at the scene, and wishing that Constance

could have seen it likewise; but the attention of the Englishman was soon diverted from the still life round them by a dark object resembling a log in the water, but giving unmistakable signs of life by swimming slowly across to the other side. Tarleton assured him it was but a poor specimen of its tribe, and that the alligators in this river were sometimes found twenty feet long. However, they must not linger to-day, for the time was going; and after a few vain attempts to rouse the alligator to show himself more fully by pelting him with branches, the gentlemen remounted their horses, and, calling Chauncey to attention, they resumed their journey.

"We must not delay; we have a long round to make," observed Tarleton, "and I am unwilling to be benighted before we reach home, for the woods are almost uninhabited at the part where we are going."

"Do I hear the sea?" asked Annersly, after they had ridden for another hour; "that distant roll can be nothing else than the Atlantic roar."

"Yes, it is the sea; we shall ride on the

shore before we bend homewards again," replied Tarleton. "The shore forms a large bay here; it would be, I fancy, an excellent harbourage, if it were known or wanted."

"Is there no village there, then, or any use made of it?" asked Chauncey.

"None at all; we are now in the midst of a wilderness, nothing, except perhaps some squatter's hut, near us for miles. The place is so solitary that they say it has been used as a good anchorage for ships from the African coast, to land negroes without incurring suspicion."

"What! you know of Africans being landed?" said Charles, glancing at the same time at Chauncey, who asked with evident excitement:

"You are aware, Alfred, of Africans being landed here?"

"Yes, I know it of a certainty. I saw some niggers a few months since, who I was assured had been landed a few months before within twenty miles of the place where we now stand. I know you are rejoiced to hear of the success of your friends, Chauncey, but my feelings are the same as

ever, and I am sorry to see the trade re-opened."

"And why so?" asked the Englishman, with affected indifference. He was curious to know if the planter's objection arose from humanity, or from a regard to his own interests as a holder of valuable stock. "Why do you object to a re-opening of the trade, Mr. Tarleton? I am told on every side that the planters believe it absolutely necessary to their own welfare."

"I do not deny that it might be advantageous to many of the growers if niggers were cheaper," replied Mr. Tarleton; "but if the foreign slave-trade is to be revived, I wish some measures could be taken to insure the better treatment of the Africans on the voyage. It is said that sometimes half their number die on the journey from overcrowding and bad management. You say, Chauncey, that it is foolish and inconsistent to object to re-opening the trade, and that our opposition to it seems to throw discredit on our own institutions; but you should remember that, while we planters seek the well-being and good condition of our negroes, these African captains

are almost reckless of life, and the niggers suffer under them to an extent which ought to be prevented."

Chauncey made no reply; he was thinking of his own philippics against those who, from "motives of interest or spurious humanity," as he had declared, opposed the revival of this desirable traffic. Since he had become more and more influenced by the opinions of Constance, he had begun to regret having so strenuously advocated the trade. He had not attended the Commercial Convention some months before, and he was now sincerely glad he had stayed away, as, had he been there, he might again have laid before his countrymen the necessity of reopening the trade.* Now that his theories

* The Convention lost nothing by Chauncey's absence; his views were ably brought forward by his friend Mr. Spratt, who presented a report proposing the revival of the slave-trade. One of the later productions of this gentleman is his protest against Mr. Jefferson Davis's veto upon the Slave-trade Bill. We subjoin an extract from it: —

"I truly think we want more slaves; we want them for the proper cultivation of our soil, for the just development of our resources, for the proper constitution of society. We have no seamen for our

were undergoing a modification, he was glad that he had avoided meeting his political friends at that time, and he was even

commerce, and no operatives for the arts. But it is not for these ends that I now oppose restrictions on the slave-trade. I oppose them from the wish to emancipate our institution. I regard the slave-trade as the TEST of *its integrity*. If *that* be right, then slavery is right, but not without. . . . . Believing, then, that this is the test of slavery, and that the institution cannot be right if the trade be not, I regard the constitutional prohibition as a great calamity. It is only upon the supposition that it is wrong *in principle*, wrong radically, that it is becoming in the general government to take organic action to arrest it. The action of the Confederacy is then a declaration of that fact. And it were vain to sustain the institution in face of such admission to its prejudice.

"It argues a pitiable want of intelligence and independence, and an abject public spirit, to suppose that a revival of the slave-trade would affect the relations of the Southern Confederacy to the great powers. France and England trade in Coolies, and neither will have the hardihood to affirm that between that and the slave-trade there is any essential difference. Practising the one, they cannot war with us for practising the other. Nor, in fact, do they urge war on the slave-trade. Spain permits the trade at Cuba, though she professes to prohibit it. Portugal and Turkey do not even so much. Even England lends her ships to keep the slave-trade open in the Black Sea, and almost every slave bought in Africa

annoyed that Tarleton should at the present moment have reminded him of his former professions. He shrank from any further conversation upon the subject, and it would have dropped of itself if the Englishman had not been in an argumentative mood, and suddenly observed:

"We were speaking the other night, Mr. Tarleton, of the injustice of the North in imposing their tariff upon the Southern States, who desire nothing better than free trade with all nations. It seems to me, therefore, that any attempt to forbid the introduction of negroes from Africa is inconsistent with the vaunted free-trade principles of the Southern agricultural community."

"I don't understand you, I believe, Mr. Annersly," replied the planter, puzzled, as he well might be, at finding the Englishman apparently taking up the cudgels in defence of the trade.

Charles explained his meaning. "I hear your politicians vaunting their own free-

is paid for in English fabrics, to the profit of the English merchant, and with the knowledge of the British Government."

trade principles to me, and expecting me to praise them, but you are as much protectionists as the North for your own manufactures. You manufacture slaves, that is, rear and train negroes for plantation work, and naturally wish to close your ports against a similar article imported from Africa; of course you are free-traders in everything else, for you are an agricultural people, and have no fear of foreign competition, but on the only article of import which you have reason to dread, the greater number of your politicians are protectionists. I have no objection to their being so; it is far better for the interests of humanity that they should; but I say that only those who are for the immediate re-opening of the trade can consistently blame the North for its tariff on other imported goods."

"Well, Sir, you must say all that to Mr. Burgoyne; he will cordially agree with you, but I myself, slaveholder as I am, am too tender-hearted to be consistent on the subject," replied Tarleton. "This foreign slave-trade is conducted with great cruelty and mismanagement, and I am always sorry to hear it advocated."

This last sentence was uttered in a lower voice, intended for the ear of Annersly alone, and Chauncey did not hear it. Charles rode on in silence, looking at the road they were pursuing, till, suddenly turning to Tarleton, he observed:

"I thought I understood this region was almost uninhabited, but there seem to have been travellers on this road before us."

"Travellers! it is almost impossible, but you are quite right, nevertheless," said Tarleton, looking in astonishment at the numerous tracks of wheels which had passed but an hour or two before. "I have often travelled this road, though never alone, because it is so lonely, and I have never seen anything like a vehicle before. I am as much at a loss to account for it as you must be, and there are the prints of other horses' feet besides. A large party have passed this way."

"It is possibly some poor fellow carrying home stores to his hut, or carting wood to burn," said Charles. Tarleton shook his head.

"These are not the wheels of one cart going backwards and forwards. There

must be some strange circumstance, which we shall find out when we have gone a mile or two further."

Charles put his horse to a faster trot; his companions fell behind; and as he passed out of hearing, Chauncey said:

"Is it possible, Alfred, that what you talked of as happening sometimes on this coast, may be now the case?"

"What? a slaver landing her cargo, do you mean?" exclaimed Tarleton, struck by the suggestion. "I trust not, but it might be. I am afraid nothing else will explain this strange assemblage of travellers on the road."

"I fear so too," said Chauncey; "why should there be such a concourse proceeding to an unknown and uninhabited place on the shore, unless there were some point of interest and some motive for secresy? Let us avoid the shore; we must for Mr. Annersly's sake."

"I would do so, but I cannot manage it unless we absolutely turn back. I do not wish to be present at the landing, as it is against the law, but really we cannot retrace our steps altogether; we must go

on. There is the sea shining through the trees, another half hour will take us to the shore."

They emerged from the forest as he spoke, and pursued their way over a sandy stretch of ground lying between it and the inlet which brought the sea some twenty-five miles inland. The water lay glittering and sparkling before them, a light wind cresting the waves with foam, but the attention of the gentlemen was fixed, not on the dancing water, but on the slanting masts of a small vessel that lay anchored at some little distance from the shore. Her boats were passing to and fro; a knot of persons was collected on the sands; and several horses and light wagons stood near, under the guardianship of a few negroes. The horses were unloosed from the shafts and were supplied with food, and one of the negroes was engaged in preparing a table and some refreshment under the shelter of a little tent. Tarleton whispered to Chauncey that he knew the man, that he was the confidential servant of a gentleman in his neighbourhood, and that doubtless his master was among the purchasers in front.

"Well, are we to go on or not?" said Chauncey, checking his horse; but two of the servants came forward and offered to hold the animals, and as Annersly observed they might as well see what was to be seen, they dismounted and went forward.

Several of the party already assembled had turned round and were watching the strangers, and one now advanced to meet them. It was Tarleton's acquaintance.

"Ah! good day to you; you are just in time, but I did not expect to see you, Mr. Tarleton. How did you learn the ship was in?"

"I did not know it. I had no intention of coming here at all, but am taking a round through the wood with some friends," replied Tarleton; and perfectly aware that his Carolinian visitor did not desire his name to be known, he avoided further conversation, by following Chauncey and Annersley down to the water's edge.

A boat was drawn up on the shore, and the sailors were lifting out two or three dark forms, that seemed at first lifeless; but they were laid on the stones in the sun, in evident expectation that they would recover.

More than thirty bodies lay on the ground, a little higher up in a place that had been dry even before the tide began to turn, and round them were seated or standing more than two hundred negroes, black as night, and in most cases perfectly destitute of clothing. The group of white men were examining these, and forming their estimates of the probable value each negro would represent to his purchaser after he was tamed and instructed in plantation work. There were not above forty Americans present, including the seamen and the agent to whom the cargo had been consigned, together with the purchasers and their overseers. Preparations were already being hurried on for commencing the sale and removing the negroes.

Annersly looked at these blacks with strange sensations; he knew they were not the wretched inhabitants of the village which he had seen plundered of its citizens. The coffle in which they had been chained had in all probability arrived long since in Cuba, but still he looked round, half expecting to see the young chief who had given him such a hearty though rude hospitality only

a few months before. The negroes were almost or quite naked, their emaciated and sickly condition was to him frightful to see, and their faces were haggard with suffering and despair. Some seemed too weak to rise from the ground, and of those last brought out from the vessel most lay apparently lifeless on the stones where the seamen had placed them. They made no effort to move; they showed no sign of life except by a few faint moans; disease of the most fearful kind had been amongst them, and their bodies, shrunk to skin and bone, were covered with terrible sores; the stench that still hung about them was that of a pest-house, and, in some cases, contact with the dead and dying had infected even the living body. The Englishman turned away, sickening at the sight, and met his own horror reflected in Chauncey's face. Tarleton, who was in some way prepared for this before, and who was more alive to the reckless waste of property, exclaimed aloud to a man who was standing by, smoking and directing the movements of the sailors as they landed the last boat-load of their cargo,

"Why, not one of these will live! How

is it that you can't take some care of them? This is a shameful sight."

"We couldn't help these few coming so; these came from the further end, and we couldn't get 'em out when we did the others at times," replied the man who was the mate of the vessel. "They is bad though, to be sure, and I don't expect some of these will live, but there's two hundred strong enough, and that's no more loss than we must calculate upon."

Charles uttered an impatient exclamation of disgust. Chauncey said nothing, but his face, pale and rigid with suppressed agitation, spoke his thoughts sufficiently.

"You don't think that that boy will ever be fit to work," continued Tarleton, pointing to a lad whose swollen limbs and distorted spine attested the cramped position in which he had been lying for many days.

"Well, sir, the loss is ours, and the owner of the ship's too, and we must bear it," replied the trader, "but he'll live, I dare say."

"And this one, and this," said Tarleton, indignantly.

"Well, that one, perhaps, is done for," said the man, turning the body lightly over with his foot. "He'll be gone in an hour or so, but these others will come to in time. Are you going to buy, sir?"

Charles turned from him to look at the wretched victims. A few of those he had at first thought lifeless, were now, he saw, conscious of their sufferings, but still incapable of moving. There was but little space left in the circle to lay the remaining negroes in as they were brought out of the boat; and two sailors, stumbling, dropped one on the ground at the very feet of the gentlemen.

"Take care! don't break all his bones," said Chauncey impatiently. It was the first time he had spoken since he reached the shore.

"It won't matter, he's dead," said one of the seamen, and he went back to push off the boat. Chauncey stooped and raised the negro's head a little on the rising bank of stones.

"Give him a chance at least," he muttered. "Fetch me a glass of water."

"Is that a woman?" said Charles, point-

ing to another figure which seemed so crumpled up, and stiffened into that position, that it was impossible for it to assume any other, now that space was allowed it.

"Yes, it is, and so are all those in that corner, all women," said the mate; "we haven't many. Sometimes they last as well as the men, but this time they haven't."

"Get me some water for the boy, rum, anything," said Chauncey, who was still stooping over the negro, a child about twelve years old. As the water was dashed over his face, he revived a little, moaned faintly, and raised his arm.

"Leave him alone, sir, he'll come right," said the trader. "He's quite a likely article, not over twelve I guess."

"Why, the face is like that of an old man," said Annersly to Chauncey. "What a tale of suffering you can see in it! He is dying, Chauncey, it's plain enough. Look how he breathes."

"Well, give me the water," said Chauncey, and he tried to pour a few drops down the boy's throat. He opened his eyes a moment, saw the white man, and shrank from his touch; his chest heaved with a

painful struggle, he moaned again, and then the water gurgled back from his lips and he lay motionless.

Chauncey saw the boy was dead, and, laying his head gently on the ground again, rose, saying:

"Let us go, Charles; we can't see much more of this. Where is Tarleton?"

"Blast 'em! they're dying off now to make up for lasting well on the v'y'ge," said the seaman: "last time we lost a hundred before we was half way over; the cursed dogs choked themselves."

"Choked themselves!" said Charles hastily, "I've heard of that, but I cannot believe it."

"It's as true as that I stand here," said the mate. "When they're real mad and sulky 'times, they just turn their tongues back into their throats, as these varmint can, and keep 'em there till they're choked."

"Look at that man," said Charles, aside to Chauncey with a shudder, "that negro, he has lain aside a dead body for six days they say. They could not get it out, and there it has lain in that stifling hold. Look at him! he is alive, but you would

think he was dead, to see what he is covered with."

"Yes, they were packed in at the far end, and we could not get to him," said the trader. "We had a plaguy run of it afore we could leave the coast, for a cursed Britisher was cruising round, and we'd a hard race to fight shy of him. There was a United States craft too, but she kept no look out, and we soon passed her by. I think the niggers have done well this time, for it's one of the worst runs we've had since we first left Boston harbour."

"Come, let us go," said Charles, and Chauncey, who needed no second invitation, followed him towards their horses. Tarleton had mingled with the group who were bargaining with the agent for the slaves. One or two had already completed their purchases, and were now taking them away. They were placed in the light wagons, and some, who were too weak to sit up, were laid on straw on the floor of the vehicles. Rum and fresh provisions were being served out to them, and three or four carts well packed with human beings were already setting off, under the

guidance of an overseer and a mulatto assistant.

"Just think of a coloured man having to help in this business," said Charles; "obliged to be the driver over his own fellow-sufferers, under fear of the lash himself, I suppose?"

Chauncey made no reply. Tarleton, on seeing his friends approaching, left the circle of purchasers, and joined them. They mounted their horses, and rode from the place in almost unbroken silence. Tarleton spoke once, to suggest that it was now too late to continue their excursion, and that they would do well to return home. His companions acquiesced, but made no rejoinder, and not a word was spoken until they had left the shore, and were once more away among the trees. Then Chauncey turned and looked at the distant water seen among the openings of the wood, but the ship and the crowd were all out of sight.

"Thank God it is made piracy!" he said, in a low voice.

"*You* say so too, Chauncey, do you?" said Tarleton; "it is, indeed, right that it

should be. I always said it was an inhuman traffic, but I had never imaged this to myself. The government is culpably weak in not taking more stringent measures against this odious traffic, and nothing is done."

"And while slavery lasts you cannot wonder at it," said the Englishman; "it is that which supports this trade. If there were no slavery, there would be no demand for Africans. You will have the trade so long as you find a market for the produce."

"If this trade is wrong, then slavery is wrong," said Chauncey half to himself, and then, resolutely closing his lips, he rode on, and keeping a little in front of his companions, journeyed home in silence.

CHAPTER IX.

Constance was waiting at the gate for them. "Have you been delayed?" she asked, as they dismounted, and Chauncey drew her arm in his. "I began to feel very anxious at your being so late. Chauncey, what is the matter?—has anything happened?" she asked hurriedly, for she understood the expression of his face.

"We have seen horrible things to-day," he replied, in a low voice; "we found a slave ship unloading, and—oh, I cannot tell you of it now."

"Been to the shore where the poor wretches were lying; saw some of them die there," said Charles, shuddering; "I shall never get it out of my head, I think. It was a horrid sight!" and he walked on to the house, as if anxious to escape the subject.

"What! the regular slave-trade, Chauncey? real negroes from Africa? What,

all those dreadful things we used to read of as children?" said Constance.

"You may have read of them," said Chauncey, under his breath; "I never have, nor ever imagined such fearful things. I shall never forget it while I live, and I have written in its defence, and have helped to bring it here."

"Oh, no, Chauncey, not you; your pamphlet had no effect on these people."

"Oh, I had been writing about it long before you saw that — for four years, or more, and speaking, and sending letters about! Oh, if I could have seen what I have seen to-day, three years ago, before I wrote that pamphlet! But if I can undo that work, I will. I will write and speak against this accursed traffic everywhere, even more than I have advocated it."

"Don't pledge yourself too hastily, Chauncey," said Tarleton, who had overheard him; "here, come into this room, all of you. Don't pledge yourself too hastily to this new view all at once. What will people — what will your friends think of what you have said?"

"They have not seen what I have, and

must be told by me," said Chauncey, quickly. "I will unsay all I have said, to show them the truth."

"But none will believe you have changed from principle. Ellsland and Spratt, with whom you have always agreed — how can they suppose you alter all your convictions in one day, merely from seeing a batch of niggers come in? It will go down to private interest, Chauncey; to a change in your own affairs; they will suppose you have got a lot of new stock, and are afraid of an open market."

"Do you think even Ellsland would dare to doubt his disinterestedness?" said Constance, indignantly.

"Indeed, I fear he would, and others as well," said Tarleton; "you Carolinians are always suspected of wishing to keep up a good price for your niggers. Whatever you do, Chauncey, you had better be silent for some time, till people have forgotten your old letters; you have been an out-and-outer, and that will be remembered against your sincerity.'

"It ought not to be," Chauncey answered, "but, at all events, I will not let my name

be quoted in support of the slave-trade any longer. I will undo what mischief I have done, if it is possible; and, first of all, I will send to Charleston, and forbid them to reprint any more of those cursed letters of mine. If I had a messenger, I would write this very night, for they have sent me word they are republishing them."

"It is indeed time then to forbid them," said Tarleton; "another reprint of those letters and articles would make it pretty well impossible for you ever to declare yourself an opponent of the African trade."

Tarleton furnished the messenger, and Chauncey wrote that evening to his publishers, forbidding them to reprint, in any form, his political speeches or letters.

The horrible scene he had witnessed at the landing of the Africans had powerfully affected Chauncey; it was the culminating blow to his already tottering faith in the institution he had once defended. He had long urged that the foreign slave-trade was necessary for the maintenance of slavery, and, if it were so, he now felt that such a necessary iniquity must condemn the system that demanded it.

Chauncey could see no means of mitigating either the evils of the African slave-trade, or those of the system that supported it. He saw that the laws could not be altered in favour of the slave, without striking at the principle of slavery itself. To recognise any right, even to kind treatment, in the slaves, would be to curtail and destroy the master's authority, and raise a doubt of the justice of slavery in the minds of negroes and owners alike. In a barbarous country such a protection of the slaves might be possible; but in a civilised community — in a republic, where the equality of men and their civil rights were theoretically confessed by all — the question of limiting the authority of the owner over his actual property, must end in acknowledging the right of the slave to his freedom. The very fury with which all such propositions for ameliorating the condition of the negro were met, showed that the slave-holders were all aware of this necessary conclusion, and the impossibility of changing any fractional part of the system became plainer to him day by day.

The horror of the African slave-trade pre-

sented itself at first more vividly to Chauncey than the other abuses of the system, because it was the last recognised; and moreover he felt himself guilty of supporting it. He mentally reviewed his own writings and speeches, he remembered how he had heard them quoted and employed to satisfy the scruples of men less persuaded than himself, he recalled the counsels he had given at political meetings, and the loud applause he had then so proudly accepted now weighed upon him like a curse. He foresaw the difficulty of unsaying what he had so long maintained by pen and word, and he was not ignorant either of the odium and even danger which any planter must run, if his sentiments were not in unison with those of his countrymen on the great vital question of slavery. How far he was disposed to awaken this odium and distrust Chauncey did not yet know himself; and indeed he anticipated difficulty enough in the mere management of his own negroes, now that he had to train a new overseer in the same principles of humanity that Mr. Bland had held. Mr. Bland, unable longer to reconcile his own kind-heartedness with the necessary correc-

tion of the slaves which his position required, was about to give up his painful task, and Chauncey knew it was impossible to replace him; and moreover he had but little confidence in his own humanity, after what had occurred at West Creek not four months since. From that hour he could no longer feel that his own negroes were sure of good treatment even at his own hands; and the consciousness of cruelty in himself made him more alive to the temptations and necessary harshness of others. He knew that Mavor was naturally kinder-hearted than he was, that his father had a far better command of his own temper, and he mistrusted himself more and more; and when he remembered with painful reluctance the hints he had heard of the cruel harshness once or twice shown by his own mother, he recognised in its full iniquity the inevitable consequences of irresponsible power. Could he answer for himself—could Constance bear to know him as the employer of the overseer who drove the negroes to their toil in the hot sun, and apportioned the number of lashes to be given in the evening to weary men and fainting women? If Bland left him,

he must keep in the field himself to overlook his new bailiff; he dared not delegate such tremendous authority to any other than the overseer who was about to leave him, and what effect would the constant sight of punishment and suffering have on himself? Should he have to give it over in despair as Bland was doing, or would the natural fierceness of his childhood return and develope itself again in the exercise of these terrible duties?

A fortnight passed, and Chauncey was still revolving these doubts in his mind. It was not surprising to Constance that he was silent and thoughtful; she knew what was passing in his mind, and he could read sympathy in her looks, but she did not seek to make him speak of what he was questioning with himself. She saw he was going through a painful mental crisis, and she augured well of its results, but she hardly suspected the extent to which his views had changed, until he said to her one day,

"Ah! Constance, darling, I must do something to keep myself from growing a hard master when I go back to West Creek."

"I think there is not much danger,

Chauncey," answered Constance, smiling; "though I fear we shall not easily find another Stephen Bland; but our negroes will be well treated."

"Well treated they shall be, at all events; but whether I can work the estate any longer I do not know. I fear not."

"Do you mean to give up the plantation?" said Constance, astonished but certainly not distressed at the idea.

"Well, if I keep the house I must let the land go, for I cannot work it properly as plantations are worked; and then this idea of manumitting the hands,—if it is practicable, we could not afford it. West Creek could not support such a continual drain; it just keeps itself together now, but the profits are *nil*. I do not forget my promise to you, Constance sweetest — I will keep it to the letter if you like, but I must find some way of helping out West Creek, even by leaving cotton-growing and taking to a profession."

"Did you foresee the difficulty when you made the promise, Chauncey?"

"No, indeed. Think of difficulties! I only thought of gaining you on any terms whatsoever," replied Chauncey, drawing her fondly to him; "but I must do something

now to support West Creek. It has hitherto paid its expenses; but it won't do so much longer, for I will not overwork and drive the poor wretches. No; I must put my own shoulder to the wheel. I will see what good I can make of my old legal studies."

"But not in South Carolina, Chauncey. You could not be a lawyer here; you could not undertake to prove a flaw in a deed of manumission, you know."

"Well, do you think there are no other cases in law than contested manumissions!" said Chauncey, laughing and kissing her. "There is plenty of other work for a lawyer to do, and if I cannot be a successful cotton-grower I had better try my fortune at the bar. It will be a good field for my ambition, and perhaps I shall like it almost as I should have done statesmanship. At least I am better fitted for it now my opinions are so changed."

"Do you want to give up political life, then, entirely, Chauncey?"

"Nothing further from my wishes, darling; but we must let the echoes of those unfortunate speeches and pamphlets die

away before we begin the thunder afresh. Now, I trust that the letter which I see that negro is bringing is some answer from that stupid fellow at Charleston to whom I sent about them."

"Who is it from?" asked Constance anxiously; for she saw him frown and look annoyed as he glanced at the handwriting.

"It's from Ellsland, and it's from Kansas; read it with me," replied Chauncey, breaking it open.

The letter was short.

"Kansas Territory.

"Dear Chauncey,—We, that is I and Mavor, get on swimmingly here. I wrote, three weeks since, to ask you to come. We want you much to temper Mavor's hot counsels somewhat. Leave your wife at home, and come; or if you like to bring her on, there's comfortable though not magnificent quarters at Westport for her. I expect you here without fail. You are a patriot; the slaveholding interest is now in danger, real danger, and every patriot must respond to the call.

"Yours ever, till death,

"G. Ellsland.

"P.S.—Mavor thinks he is on the tracks

of that girl who escaped from your mother some time since; but she has got into such a nest of Free-soil hornets, that we daren't touch her till she comes out of it."

Constance read this letter with Chauncey, and both looked up with a start of horror at the same instant.

"I thought she was far off in the North by this time," said Constance, faintly. Chauncey had grown pale, and for a moment he was silent; but after re-reading the letter he said:

"I had hoped she was already in the North, and on her way to Canada by now; they ought to send her there at once."

"Is she not safe in the Free States — in New England at least?" said Constance.

"She is not safe anywhere in the United States. She might be, perhaps, in New England; but if Maxwell is wise he will send to my father and buy her back; but meantime he thinks she is safe in Kansas, I imagine."

"And you think she is not safe?" Constance asked, anxiously.

"She is safe if she is protected by any number of fighting men, as Ellsland seems

to say she is; but there is no real security for her while she is in the territory; she ought to be got out of it as quickly as possible; but I dare say Maxwell dares not move her out from the place where she is now well protected, at least while Mavor is looking after her."

"Oh! could you not write to Mavor, Chauncey, and stop him?" said Constance.

"I fear a letter would do no good," said Chauncey. "He would pay no attention to it whatever. If you liked, I might go to Kansas, or as far as Missouri, and see Mavor myself; and I think it will be the best thing I can do."

"Go all the way to Kansas, Chauncey? then I will go with you — at least to Missouri, shall I not?" said Constance. "It will be many weeks before you come back again. Let me go too; you see Ellsland says it would be quite feasible for me to accompany you."

Chauncey was only too glad that Constance wished to go, for the idea of quitting her for so long an absence was not to be borne; and he was relieved from his uneasiness about leaving her alone in Mis-

souri while he crossed the Kansas border, by the offer of Charles to be likewise of the party. It was resolved that they should start at once, and travel with the utmost diligence; for any chance of their being useful to Irene must depend on the quickness of their arrival in the territory where Mavor was seeking for her.

Constance tried to hide her extreme anxiety for her friend, and affected to believe their success was certain; but Chauncey was not deceived; he saw her agitation and distress, and it added a pang to his own self-reproach as he remembered that he might have ensured Irene's liberty long before.

Another letter, written by Ellsland a few days later, but arriving immediately after the first, somewhat relieved their fears for the present, by saying, after much political information, that Mavor had given up all thoughts of recovering his property for the time, as she was too well guarded by the rebels among whom she had taken refuge.

This intelligence did not, however, alter their determination of proceeding at once to Kansas. Charles observed that as their

journey was now arranged, it was a pity it should not take place, and Chauncey could then learn what he wanted to know of political events in the Kansas territory, from eye-witnesses and credible authority. Chauncey agreed, adding, moreover, that he had already written to Mavor to announce his coming, and was therefore pledged to go; but in his secret heart he resolved that he would not leave Kansas before he had seen Irene safe on her way to Canada, under trusty escort, or should receive from Colonel Burgoyne authority and permission to manumit her at once in the territory. He wrote to his father upon the subject before he left Georgia; and it is probable that Colonel Burgoyne received at this time another communication relating to Irene's liberty; for we have found among Maxwell's papers a memorandum to the effect that he had written to the planter, begging him to set any price he thought fit on Irene, and make her over to him. Chauncey, however, knew nothing of this, and entreated his father, as a personal favour, to allow him to refund the sum he had paid for Irene, and empower him to record a

deed of manumission for her. The answer to his letter was to reach him in Missouri, and thither, after a cordial leave-taking of Mr. Tarleton, Chauncey with his wife and Annersly proceeded.

CHAPTER X.

The travellers arrived without let or hindrance at the western border of Missouri; but the reports which reached them of the continued fighting in the Kansas territory, made them very uneasy for the safety of Mavor, who, they learned, had gone there with Ellsland. It appeared that, not satisfied with the information they could receive in Missouri, they had joined themselves to a troop of mounted volunteers, chiefly Missourians, but numbering also many gentlemen from the Carolinas and Georgia. They had left their servants in the charge of a tavern-keeper, and told him they expected to be absent at least three weeks; and the only way of communicating with Mavor seemed to be, as Annersly proposed, to ride into the territory and pay a visit to the camp of the volunteer company, which was reported to be within twenty miles of the frontier.

On hearing this, Chauncey resolved to go on to find his brother without delay, and wished that Annersly would remain with Constance in Missouri; but the Englishman was as anxious to cross the border as his friend; he was determined to see and judge for himself of the state of affairs in the territory, and he was sure that there could be no danger for Constance if she accompanied them.

"Here are two of us to guard her, and we are going only among our own friends, and besides, the Free-soilers are not savages. I see no reason why she should not accompany us."

Chauncey was still reluctant, but Constance herself supported her brother's suggestion. She did not wish, she said, to be left in Missouri, and if they should learn when they joined Mavor that the unsettled state of the territory rendered it unsafe for her to remain, she could then easily return into Missouri, provided they would in that case, return with her. She laughingly declared that if there was any danger her post was by her husband, and she would not be dissuaded by any argument, for she felt that

in case of any chance meeting with the Free-soilers (an improbable contingency in itself) her presence might be a protection to them rather than an inconvenience.

Chauncey gave way at last, for he could not prove that there was any positive danger, and undertook to procure a good saddle-horse for Constance, for Annersly scouted the idea of a wagon as a means of locomotion, and Constance, a capital horsewoman, enjoyed the idea of the ride; and leaving the luggage with Chauncey's servants to follow them, they set off for a day's journey across the border.*

The day was well suited for riding, and it was unanimously agreed they had done well to reject the offer of the wagon; the morning was cold but bright, and the soft turf, suggestive of a long gallop, tantalising

* The plains of Kansas are well known to English readers through the fascinating pen of Fenimore Cooper; for the prairie where Ishmael Bush and his seven lawless sons carried their captive in the hopes of a rich ransom, was only a little beyond those where the Missourian supporters of "law and order" assembled by hundreds to attack the Free-soil settlers in 1856, and subsequent years.

alike to horses and riders. They rode in a westerly direction, having made inquiries as to the probable position of the little troop of Missourians in which they were seeking Mavor, and trusting to find more positive intelligence at a farm-house where they were to rest and bait their horses.

At the farmhouse, however, they were somewhat disappointed by learning that the little company had already left its resting-place, and its exact movements were as yet unknown. Nevertheless it could not be far from them, and it was even possible that some portion of it might be on its way home to the frontier. Chauncey therefore continued the journey, trusting to meet the returning party, and learn from them where Mavor and Ellsland were.

He became, however, very uneasy about the wisdom of their proceeding when he learnt that the Free-soilers were in a state of exceeding irritation, and that but a fortnight before, a large body of them, under the command of one of their most redoubted leaders*, had attacked and forced

* James Montgomery. Governor Denver had been compelled to make a treaty with this bold Free-soil

a border fortress where one of their companions lay imprisoned.

"But that does not necessarily prove them so lawless; the man may have been unlawfully arrested," said Constance, thinking of Maxwell's late imprisonment in South Carolina.

"But it proves them desperate," replied Chauncey, "and moreover there were Federal officers in Fort Scott, and their presence ought ——"

"I've heard *that* within this last half hour of those Missourians which I never expected to hear of any civilised men," exclaimed Charles, interrupting him.

"Why, what have you heard?" asked his

leader some months previously. The massacre of eleven Free-soil citizens, who were seized while at work by the pro-slavery men, had roused the whole Free-soil population to arms, and the governor, seeing a collision imminent between the settlers and the United States troops, made terms and a treaty of peace with Montgomery. In November following, one of Montgomery's friends was arrested and imprisoned in Fort Scott, notwithstanding the treaty, and on the 16th of December, Montgomery, with a hundred and fifty men, marched on the fort and delivered the prisoner.

sister in surprise, and somewhat alarmed by his manner.

"I've just seen a man while you were talking in there, and heard him boasting—yes, boasting that he had killed one of the Free-soilers and brought home his *scalp*," replied the Englishman in horror. Constance turned pale, and Chauncey exclaimed in disgust,

"He boasted of it! he dared confess it—the ruffian! I had heard such a thing spoken of, but I never could believe it, and I hardly can do so now."

"It makes me feel anxious to get out of the territory," said Charles in a low voice, intended more for his sister's ear than for Chauncey's. "If these are the exploits of our friends, we may expect, and need not be surprised, if we meet a sharp retaliation from the enemy."

"We are perfectly safe now, for our friends are before us," said Chauncey, "and we shall never be out of their protection. And moreover, Charles, these atrocities took place long ago, when there was great and general excitement. There is no general war now, only a few occasional encounters,

in this part of the territory, which is, as you may say, a debatable ground."

"Well, let us ride on, for I own I shall be glad to see our friends," said Charles. "How is it? The fellow to whom I have been speaking talked of the regular soldiers having been here. Were they not able to put a stop to such revolting atrocities? I hear of sacking and burning a town."

"The troops were here to reduce the rebels to order, and these wild border men came to help them, and disgrace the name of the law," replied Chauncey. "Our troops ought certainly to have been able to prevent any excesses on the part of their allies, but I fear they sympathised with their hatred of the rebels."

"Now Chauncey, pardon me, but as I believe you half sympathise with these Free-soilers yourself," said Charles, "don't call them rebels, but explain to me something about them. Who are the 'law and order' party in this unhappy territory? I hear that there is 'a party of order,' but I don't see its workings."

"The Southerners—the Missourians; they support the laws of the first legislature of the territory."

"Then give me anarchy sooner than such law and order. Is that the legislature that they elected at the point of the bowie knife? the bogus legislature, as the Free-soilers call it."

"Yes, it is; you have been studying the matter, Charles. The Free-soilers elected a second, which passed laws contrary to those of the first, and which would make Kansas a free state. I have no fault to find with them for this second election, as their first was controlled by the illegal votes of the people from Missouri; but unfortunately, they quarrelled with the governors appointed them by the Federal authority, and so incurred the opposition of the Government."

"But was it Congress or only the President who sent troops against them?" asked Charles; but he was interrupted by an exclamation from his sister, who pointed out a distant group of mounted men riding from the westward.

"Well, we ought not to allow ourselves to feel alarmed," said Chauncey, after attentively considering them. "They may be our own friends; indeed it is far more probable that they are so, than that any of the

Free-soilers should venture to cross the line of the company we are behind. We will not meet them, however, till we can feel more certain of who they may be; let us ride in that direction towards the hill, and we can observe them at our leisure."

He turned his horse towards a low eminence, or rather a gentle swell of the prairie that lay on their right hand. Annersly dismounted to tighten his girths, but he begged Constance and Chauncey to canter on to the base of the hill, where he would overtake them: from this point they could clearly distinguish the persons of the approaching group, and yet avoid the chance of encountering them, unless they chose to ride in their direction. The horsemen, however, seemed desirous of the meeting, for bending aside from their path likewise, they quickened their pace, and rode directly towards the strangers. Chauncey's first impulse was to advance to meet them, but on second thoughts he preferred to allow them the power of passing by without any questions if they thought fit; and taking hold of Constance's bridle, he proceeded at a slow trot along the side of the

hill, while the party of strangers came on after them, and soon rode alongside.

"They are Southerners, they are our friends," Chauncey said, in a low voice to his wife, as he saw her grow pale; but he pushed his horse closer to her, as the foremost of the riders came up behind them. He tried to keep his own animal between hers and the strangers, but their group divided, and passed slowly on each side, eyeing them with fierce and scrutinising glances. Their appearance was not such as to allay the apprehensions of Constance; they were dressed in dirty flannel shirts of red or green, and they reeked of whiskey even as they rode by. Their unwashed and sunken faces, were almost covered with their tangled beards and uncombed hair, and their bloodshot eyes had an expression of ruffianly ferocity. They were well armed, and with terror Constance heard one of them say to his companion, as he rode not six yards behind them,—

"By ——, he's on a fine beast, and I don't see why he shouldn't walk the rest of the way and give it to us now."

Chauncey saw it was time to speak and

proclaim his own connection with the Southern party. Turning therefore to one of the riders, he asked if they had come from the encampment he was on his way to reach, and if they knew where his brother, Mr. Burgoyne, was at that time.

Surprised and perhaps disappointed to find that he was one of themselves, for he had evidently a strong desire to possess himself of Chauncey's horse, the Missourian answered in the affirmative as regarded the place he had come from, and the company he belonged to; but he could say nothing of Mavor Burgoyne, though he remembered having seen that gentleman in their camp, who he was told was about to have the command of their company.

Chauncey thanked him for this information, and immediately giving his horse the spur, rode on.

"*Is* he a Southerner do you think?" said one of the Missourians, in a dissatisfied tone. "What should he have that girl riding with him for?"

"He looks from the South," replied another, "but I don't feel too sure; however, we've let him go, and there's no help

for it, if he isn't. He has a good horse though, and if I'd felt certain he was not a Southerner, I'd have had it mine by now."

Chauncey did not slacken his speed until he and his wife were well out of sight of the Missourians, and, turning round the foot of the hill, had placed its shelter between themselves and any rifle ball which might have been sent in pursuit.

"Well, men have often prayed to be delivered from their friends," he said, forcing a laugh, as they halted; "and, certainly, we are well away from ours. I was indeed foolish, my darling, to bring you here. We will go back into Missouri at once."

"No, no, we must find Mavor, and make him promise not to pursue Irene first," said Constance, who was trembling, notwithstanding her efforts to look brave. "When we once get to the camp of these men, and see their officers, we shall be safe. Where is Charles, why does not he come? I will not stay in Missouri while you are still here in Kansas, Chauncey," she continued. "Who knows but that if you had been

without a woman with you now, they would have insisted on you going with them?"

"Well, perhaps they might; but I think they wanted my horse more than me," replied Chauncey, glancing back uneasily, to see that they were not followed. "However, we must find Charles. We had best try and round this hill, I think, for he will probably have gone out of the path to escape meeting those fellows, and is looking for us now. We will consult with him upon what is wisest to be done."

"Consult with me, not with him, if it is about my going into Missouri," answered Constance, with a laugh; but she stopped as her eye followed that of Chauncey and she became aware of another traveller, who had reined in his horse at some distance, and was watching them attentively.

"He is only one man, and we must go on if we hope to meet your brother," said Chauncey, laying his hand however on his pistol, and they rode slowly forward. The stranger grasped his own revolver, though he made no further hostile demonstration;

but when they were nearly close to him, he asked in a clear sharp voice,—

"Free-state or pro-slavery?"

"Free-state," said Constance, quickly, as Chauncey hesitated a moment for a reply to this question, which was certainly a difficult one for him to answer. He smiled at her eagerness, while the stranger replied,—

"Ah! I thought as much when I saw you first; but how have you passed the Missourians? Haven't you met them? They are all down there."

"Yes, we have met them, and they let us pass," answered Chauncey.

"You must have told them another story, then, to what you tell me," said the stranger; and his keen glance rested on the Southerner's face for a moment in evident suspicion. Chauncey saw his doubt, and answered,—

"My wife is a Free-soiler, as she told you, but you are right in supposing I am a Southerner. But I know nothing of the Kansas quarrels as yet. I have come from the South to see for myself what is being done, and judge who is in the right."

"You have got a good deal to learn, then," replied the other with a smile. "So I suppose you explain your principles to the Missourians, while your wife tells hers to us Free-soilers. It's not a bad idea either; but I'm afraid the pro-slavery men won't choose to hold you for one of theirs long."

He had turned his horse, and was riding slowly on with them. Chauncey continued, "I have a brother who is also in Kansas, but he is paying a visit to Captain Myddleton, one of the officers of those very Missourians. I think he will not take any active part in the quarrel, but like me, has come to learn how the matter is proceeding. Our object is, therefore, to remain neutral, mere spectators; and I do not suppose we shall find any difficulties in so doing."

"None at all, so far as it rests with us," replied the Free-soil man, whose language and tones were far less rough than Constance would have been led to expect from his dress. "No one would stop you while the lady is with you. Besides, we are willing enough that anybody should come among us to see what we are doing. We know

we are in the right, and are not afraid of our works being inquired into, but I don't know that the pro-slavery men will be as willing to let you ride about; you may be stopped, and I should advise you to be careful."

"I suppose, if their officers furnish us with passports, we shall be in no danger from any of them," said Constance; "we may go where we like with that protection."

"I don't know," replied the Free-soiler; "it might help you; but I've heard of a man being hung by these miscreants, with a pass from one of their own officers in his pocket. No one is trusted here, unless he shows himself by his deeds. For aught I can tell, you may be a pro-slavery man, and I may be foolishly trusting myself near you."

After a moment's pause, he continued, "If you really want to see us Free-staters, and learn what we want, and why we fight the Missourians, and are called rebels, I will send you to a house near here, where you can remain, or where you can leave the lady, if you like. It's at Seaward's Hope,

not three miles from here; and you can learn all you want to know from Dr. Seaward," he added, with the same peculiar smile round the corner of his mouth with which he had formerly received the idea of the Southern gentleman applying himself to understand the causes and bearings of the disputes in the territory. "Well, I must not stop; I've a long journey to Salt Springs before me, and you may tell Missis Seaward that you met me, and that I was past the Missourians, if you will."

"She will know who you are, I suppose," said Constance.

"Oh, yes! say you met Rogers; my cabin's close to Seaward's Hope, and if you will ride with me to the top of the hill before us, I can show you the place."

Chauncey thanked him for his courtesy; but explained how the arrival of the Missourians had separated them from their companion, for whom they must wait or search. His new acquaintance answered that their wisest course would be to continue the road to Seaward's Hope, which Charles had probably already reached, as, in turning aside to avoid the horsemen, he

must have skirted the other side of the low hill they were now crossing, but that if he was not at the farmhouse before they were, it would be easy for Chauncey to retrace his steps, while leaving Constance under shelter. "Besides," he concluded, as he saw them disposed to take his advice, "if your friend hasn't gone that way, it is ten to one I shall meet him, and I'll send him on to you; so, good day, and tell Missis Seaward, or the Doctor, if he's at home again, that you met me."

He shook the bridle, and put his horse into quicker motion; Chauncey and his companion followed his example, and rode on, casting anxious glances round for Annersly, but without avail. After riding for half an hour, they reached a long line of bushes, which followed the bank of a little watercourse, and saw, on the other side of this, the farmhouse of which the stranger had spoken. Chauncey observed at some distance a thin wreath of smoke from among the brushwood, and conjectured that it marked the site of another dwelling; but the homestead in front was clearly the one

they were seeking, and, crossing the brook, they went towards it. Behind the building stood corn stacks, and a long shed, which seemed to be the stable, for several horses were standing before it, eating, and one or two men were busied with them.

"This seems to be the front entrance," said Chauncey, as he assisted Constance to dismount. "I must take the horses round to the stable, unless any of those men will come for them; there seems a perfect stud in the yard now."

"They have seen us, and one of the men is coming this way; you can leave the horses," said Constance, and she turned to the door, but stopped, surprised at the sound of loud and confused voices which came from within. "They are quarrelling, are they not?" she said, drawing back in some alarm.

"Or drunk," said Chauncey. "They don't invite us in, certainly; but we must see what welcome they will give us; for it is time I went back to look for Charles, and our horses want rest. Don't come in, dearest, till I have been in."

He knocked at the door, and, receiving

no answer, opened it, and went in. Constance remained for a moment outside; but the appearance of the man who advanced towards the horses was not reassuring, and she remembered the Free-soiler had said no one would interfere with Chauncey while she was with him, so she pushed open the door, and followed him in. The scene inside, though she was prepared for it, in some degree, by the loud voices that had reached her ears, alarmed her. The furniture was disarranged, drawers and cupboards were thrown open, and their contents dragged out, while five or six well-armed men, fierce with whiskey, sat at and upon the tables, on which lay their revolvers, amidst the fragments of the meal they were making, and one or two broken desks and small boxes, rifled, apparently, in search of money. These men were, evidently, no rightful inmates of the house; their muskets were leaning against the wall, and in the midst, pale and frightened, stood two ladies, whose terror announced them to be prisoners, even if the articles of female work, which lay around in confusion, had not shown them

to have been suddenly surprised by the marauding party. They looked anxiously towards the door as Chauncey entered, as if expecting the arrival of friends. Chauncey saw at a glance that the party were Southerners, and, probably, a detachment from the troop he had encountered already; but these were half intoxicated, and were still drinking the last drops in their flasks, while they loudly extolled their own prowess, and threatened all Free-soilers with extermination. At first they accepted the stranger as one of themselves, and saluted him as a friend.

"It's a good thing, Williams, we followed your advice and filled our flasks before we went," cried one of the invaders, "for there's not a drop of anything in the house. Is it you, man? Have you looked through the stables? No sneaking rebel hidden there, is there, now?"

"Eh, it's not him," said another, who occupied the chair of honour at the head of the table. "Who is it? Who are you, stranger, and where do you come from?"

"From South Carolina, and I am looking for Captain Myddleton. Is he here, or can

you direct me to him ?" answered Chauncey, seeing with some alarm that Constance was already in the room. The Southerner at the table began his reply, saying that he was of Myddleton's party, but that his chief was not there ; but the elder of the two ladies hastily advanced to Chauncey, and, speaking in tones that trembled in spite of her efforts to appear calm, said,—

"Sir, if you are an officer and a gentleman, you will be able to ensure us common civility from your men. Will you permit me and my daughter to retire to our own room?" She looked towards a door that seemed to lead to an adjoining apartment.

"Certainly, madam, you can go if you like; these are all gentlemen here, and no one will wish to detain you against your desire," answered Chauncey, drawing back so as to allow her free passage to the door ; and though his hand touched his revolver lightly, he bowed courteously to the company, as if to invite them to sustain the character he had assumed for them. Two or three seemed to accept the hint, and made rude salutations in return ; but one of them, more drunk than the others, left his

seat and placed himself between the door and the ladies, who were retreating towards it.

"We an't going to hurt you, and you shan't go. We want to know where your husband is, ma'am?"

"You can go on, madam; no one will stop you," said Chauncey, placing himself between her and the Missourian. She quickly opened the door, and, drawing her daughter after her, closed it behind them. With an angry oath the man turned to Chauncey.

"Just you move from that door, stranger. Just mind your own business, or it will be the worse for you."

"Where's your captain?" said the young Carolinian, taking his stand in front of the door. The leader of the party answered to the call by rising and coming forward in a menacing attitude, his hand already grasping the revolver in his belt. Chauncey saw that he was ready to make an attack, and, warned to be prudent by a glance at his wife, in a quiet and conciliatory tone announced his own name and relationship to the gentleman then visiting their superior officer, and reminded them that

they had no orders to make war on women, even though they were the wives of Free-soilers.

"If they hadn't been women they'd have been hung up already," cried the other fiercely; "but they ought to amuse us a little for our forbearance. Will you move away, stranger?" and, as he spoke, the first ruffian darted past Chauncey, and, catching the handle of the door, tried to open it. A kick from his powerful foot shook it on its hinges, and a second would probably have forced it open, had not Chauncey seized him by the collar, and, dragging him back, flung him somewhat roughly against the table. He rose to his feet with an oath, and cocked his pistol.

"For shame! what!—you a Southerner and a gentleman would you attack women and girls?" said Chauncey, as the rest of the party sprang to their feet. "You can meet the Free-soilers in open fight, and take a fair revenge on them there; but if you are brave men, leave the women alone. If you are the officer," he continued, turning to the leader, who stood close to him, revolver in hand, "you ought to have seen that your men were

half drunk and not fit to be trusted. You ought to have been the first to protect the ladies."

"D—n you! stop your cursed palaver!" cried the man, and he discharged his pistol directly in Chauncey's face; another shot came from the other side of the room, and Chauncey fell stunned to the ground. His wife sprang forward with a shriek of terror, but one of the marauders caught her arm and held her back from him.

"Oh! he is dead! he is dead! oh, let me go!" she cried, struggling to free herself from his detaining grasp.

"He's dead enough, and that's how all disturbers of law and order should be quieted," said the captain, advancing towards her as, breaking from the hold of the Missourian, she knelt by Chauncey's side and raised his head from the floor. "He's dead, I calculate he is," he remarked. "Why, haven't I seen you before, somewhere? Yes, I have," he continued, as he placed his hand under her chin, and forced her to look up towards him. "Yes, he's dead enough, I can tell you."

"You'd better make sure of it," cried

another, catching a knife from one of his companions and reeling forward.

"No, no, Will, you shan't do it," expostulated a third. "If he isn't dead, leave him —he is done for. Saville, you just leave that girl alone, d'ye hear? No one shall hurt her!" He snatched the knife from his half-drunken companion, and, advancing to the captain, was about to push him away from Constance, when the report of a pistol sounded outside the door, and drew their attention elsewhere.

CHAPTER XI.

Charles Annersly was still several hundred yards behind his friends when he saw them surrounded by the mounted party of Missourians, and for a few moments he watched the group in anxious suspense; as soon as he saw them emerge in safety from the cluster of horsemen and ride away, he had to think of his own danger. It was evident that the strangers, if not positive enemies, were not to be trusted as friends, since Chauncey left their company with such good speed; and Annersly drew his rein and turned aside to avoid meeting them in his turn. He could see that his companions were riding round the foot of the long hill, and, with the view to rejoin them, he urged his horse up the declivity, trusting to find his sister and Chauncey in sight as soon as he reached the summit. The path, however, kept him within a too easy range of the strangers' rifles if they chose to use

them, and he was obliged, for his own safety, to leave the straight road, and, turning to his right hand, ride along the southern side of the hill, which extended for several miles east and west, never rising to any great height, and sloping gently to the prairie. He lost sight of the party of horse, who continued their journey southwards, and he tried to pursue his original course over the brow. But on the wide prairie, with no indication of a path, it was difficult for him to estimate rightly the distance he travelled ; and when he reached the summit of the slope, he found himself much farther than he could have expected from its western foot, round which Chauncey had taken his way. Charles descended to the prairie, and once there, another gently rising and almost imperceptible swell hid all distant objects from his eyes. After going two more miles he was about to choose a fresh direction, when he heard a shout and saw a man waving a handkerchief to him, and a second lying on the ground close by. Charles trotted up slowly, examining the strangers somewhat suspiciously, for their rifles lay on the turf by them, and he had been apprised of the

need of caution by the stories he had lately heard. But, as he came nearer, he saw that the second of the two strangers was pale and faint, and his shirt soaked in blood. It was evident that from him there was no danger.

"Are you a Free-state man?" said the other stranger, as Annersly came within speaking distance.

"Yes, by Jove, that I am," said Charles, promptly.

"It's fortunate you've come, then, and with your horse, that we may move him," said the other. "Here is another of us disabled, as Miller and Johnson were two days since, though I trust not so dangerously. The border ruffians passed this way, and left him for dead."

"Cannot we bind up his wound?" said Charles, as he dismounted from his horse.

The stranger answered that he had already done this as well as a handkerchief torn in strips could do; and that if they could move the injured man to a cabin a mile distant, he could then procure proper materials for dressing his hurts. He added that the Missourians had passed the place

not half an hour before, that he himself had met them a mile further back, but had escaped their observation by concealing his person amongst some brushwood that grew near; but that his friend had been overtaken and knocked down while walking quietly along the road to his own cabin, which was not far distant.

"But why, on earth, should they attack men whom they cannot know to be their foes?" said Annersly.

"They knew we were Free-soilers; but if they hadn't they might have done it all the same," replied the other. "Will you help me, sir, to lift him on to the saddle? Can you help yourself at all, Mr. Henry?"

The wounded man rose to his feet with the aid of Annersly's arm, and, with much assistance from his two companions, slowly and painfully mounted the horse, and they proceeded onward at a gentle walk, for he was evidently in extreme suffering.

"But you are not Free-soilers," said Annersly, in some surprise, for he saw that both the strangers were unmistakable gentlemen. "You are not inhabitants of the Territory? I mean you are visitors like myself?"

"We have been in Kansas three years and more," replied the farmer. "I came from New York. I was a physician; but I found my profession was too much for my health, and I came here, hoping to find a quiet healthy life as a farmer. You may have heard my name, Dr. Seaward, at New York."

"I had not then had the pleasure of visiting your country," replied the Englishman, with a slight bow. "But how is it that you remain here now? This place is no quiet country for peaceful settlers."

"I have had to practise the art of war, certainly, besides that of medicine," answered the physician; "the Missourians have given me work enough in both lines to keep my hand in."

"It is fortunate, indeed, that you are here, then," said Annersly, looking at the wounded man, who seemed hardly able to keep himself upright in the saddle, although partly supported by Dr. Seaward's arm. "Have you had any other accidents, I should say assaults, lately?"

"Very lately, indeed. I was at a house twenty miles off, only two days ago, and I

was called to a cabin a mile distant, where those pro-slavery ruffians had been and almost murdered two men — I may say quite, for they will not live."

He was interrupted by a voice shouting his name, and Charles saw a man hurrying towards them; he carried an axe in his hand, and seemed to have been engaged in loading a small wagon with light timber; but his rifle was on his shoulder, and he was in high excitement and alarm, as he pointed with earnest gestures to some distant object, which a rise in the ground hid from them, but which he said he could distinguish from the place where he had been working.

"God help us! what is it, Asa?" said the physician, leaving the care of his wounded friend to Charles, and hastening forward.

The answer was short, but Annersly saw the farmer start and almost stagger at the news, and when he turned round to him, it was with the countenance of a man who sees death before him.

"The ruffians have gone to my house, and my wife and daughter are alone there," he

said, in a husky voice. "Mr. Henry, you must give us the horse, he will carry two. Asa, help him down, and quick!"

"I'll lay you in the wagon, Mr. Henry," said the young woodman, dropping his axe, and lifting the wounded man from the saddle. "You'll lie easy there, and we'll be back for you afore night."

He almost lifted his friend into the little cart, taking his whole weight on his broad shoulders as if he had been a mere boy, and, pushing the wagon back a few yards among the brushwood, said,—

"Doctor, you and that stranger get on the beast. I'll be up to the house 'most as quick as you, I guess. There, Mr. Henry, if any of the Pukes* ride past this way, you may lie snug; they won't look for you there;" and, taking up his rifle, he ran after his two companions at a pace that promised to leave him but a few strides behind the double-weighted horse.

Annersly had intended to trust to his own feet, but he obeyed the doctor's order to mount behind him, and saw by the fran-

* A Kansas term for the Missourian borderers.

tic efforts he made to lash the unwilling animal into a gallop, that he felt that life and death hung on his quick arrival on the scene.

"They will not hurt the women, though they may take all they can lay their hands on," Charles tried to say. "Are there no men about the place — no neighbours?"

"If there are they will be murdered," answered Seaward, drawing his revolver from his belt; "I've had my house burned once. Merciful heaven! it's a complete troop," he exclaimed, as he came in sight of his own homestead, and saw the number of horses in the yard.

"If there are many, they'll have officers, and be more under proper restraint," Charles was going to say; but the loud report of fire-arms, and a woman's shriek, came on his ear at the same moment, and cut short his words. He dropped from the horse, and ran to the house-door, which he saw was but imperfectly closed, while Seaward raised his voice in a loud shout, and fired off a barrel, as if to give notice of their approach to the enemy or the prisoners within. The effect of this was instantaneous; the door, as Annersly reached it, was closed violently,

while a chorus of loud voices rose in oaths and threats from the marauders within.

"Break in the window!" cried Seaward, in agony, endeavouring to climb on to the narrow sill of the casement.

"And be knocked on the head, as you look in," said Asa, seizing his arm, and dragging him back. "Let us go to the door, and frighten off the wretches. Don't show 'em we're only three men."

He struck a violent blow on the door with his axe; while the doctor, little heeding his advice, was hurrying off round the corner of the house, to seek a back entrance. Loud cries of confusion sounded, however, from the building. Another door swung violently open, and closed again, and the voices of the invaders were heard in the yard behind, while the clatter of their horses' feet showed they were mounting in haste.

"Let us in, Mary, if you are there!" cried Seaward, at the front entrance.

"They're all right; I see them," said Asa, who had returned to the window, and while he spoke, the door was thrown open, and the younger of the two women rushed towards them.

"All safe, my child? Where's your mother? Oh, thank God, I find you unhurt!" exclaimed her father, fervently, as she threw herself into his arms. Asa sprang across the room to secure the other door after their flying enemies, and Annersly, following the same impulse, closed and barred that by which they had entered.

"What! one of them down? Who shot the rascal?" cried the Kansas borderer, as he saw the wounded man on the ground, while Charles, at the same moment recognised, with terror, his sister and her husband.

"Oh, God! what is it? Is he hurt?" he exclaimed. "Is he wounded?"

Dr. Seaward knelt down by Chauncey. "He's only stunned," he said. "He's all right; he's coming to himself. How came he here?"

"Are you safe, darling?" said Chauncey, faintly, as he recovered his senses. He looked round at the bystanders, and saw that all was right, and Charles present.

"Are you hurt, Chauncey? Chauncey, are you hurt?" asked Constance, in agonised suspense.

"No, I think not—a little, perhaps," he replied, making an effort to rise.

"Stay where you are," said Dr. Seaward, peremptorily. "Don't move till we have a bed to lay you on. He is hurt. What is this about the coat sleeve? Give me your scissors quickly," he added, turning to his wife. "There is mischief, but perhaps nothing to signify."

Asa swept off the pile of wearing-apparel that had been tumbled out of one of the rifled drawers on to the rough bed, while Annersly and the doctor lifted the young Southerner from the ground, and laid him on the mattress. The coat sleeve was cut open, and a deep flesh wound in the shoulder discovered, not, however, a serious one, the doctor declared, though he remarked—

"It might have been a dangerous shot. Keep still, sir. It's no use making light of it; it's a deep wound, and it must be properly seen to. I see you'll be a refractory patient; but you'll have to be laid up for a while. You are down for a fortnight, I can tell you."

Chauncey smiled, as if he thought the threat was not a very alarming one, with

such a nurse as his wife near him, while Charles observed—

"You have had a narrow escape, Chauncey. Here is your hat, with a bullet hole right through it."

"He has had a narrow escape, truly," said Dr. Seaward. "It's seldom these ruffians miss their aim, and leave their work undone. Two days since, I took out three balls from a poor fellow whom they had murdered. A wretched fellow, from South Carolina, shot him first; but the others would have their turn at him too."

"Well, won't you see to this wound now?" interrupted Annersly, who saw Chauncey exchange an anxious look with Constance as the name of South Carolina was mentioned. He thought to himself that Mr. Ellsland might well have been the first assailant; but the subject must not be continued, and Seaward commenced his work on Chauncey's arm, aided by his wife, who seemed to possess a knowledge of what was necessary, and a calmness in doing it that was too obviously the result of long familiarity with such sudden emergencies.

As soon as the wound was dressed, Dr. Seaward had Chauncey removed to an inner and smaller room, and left his patient to the gentle care of Constance. He went himself out to the stables followed by Annersly. The Doctor addressed Asa, who was fastening up the fence, which the Missourians had broken down in wanton amusement.

"Why don't you go and bring Mr. Henry, or take him home to his own house, Asa? His wounds must be stiffening in the cold."

"No they an't," said Asa, quietly, without turning for a moment from his work. "He's fixed nicely. I met Lyddell; he'd come down, hearing the firing, and I told him to take the horse, and fetch home Mr. Henry and the waggon. It's light work, and I guess he can do it."

"This is one of the strongest fellows that Ohio can give us," said the Doctor, aside to Annersly; and he utterly scorns the powers of us poor city-born men. We may do the light work with the ladies. Asa, in his own estimation, does all the really important business. Well, I must go and see to Mr. Henry."

"Not yet. Don't be in such a darned hurry, Doctor," observed the Ohio man. "Lyddell an't got the waggon tackled yet. You can walk to Mr. Henry's house in twenty minutes. You'd best come to the stables now; there an't a hoof left there."

"What! have they taken all?"

"There an't a hoof in the place—not even the old grey, that I thought no one 'd have cared for. No, the scamps have taken everything. I guess your friends had horses too, hadn't they, stranger? They're gone too, all on 'em."

"It's the second time these wretches have robbed me," said Dr. Seaward, after a moment's silence; "I've lost the worth of three hundred and fifty dollars now, to-day. However it's something to find the stables still left. Last time they burned everything over our heads."

Asa was silent, pondering on their loss, and presently said, "You ain't half counted the cost, Doctor—the horses were worth that, any day—five on 'em; to say nothing of the two of the strangers; but how will you get the soil ploughed? You'll hardly get fresh beasts as soon as you want 'em. However,

hadn't we best go and see if the scamps have found out the arm-chest? They've been prying the hay over, I guess," he added, as he took down a pitchfork which hung against the door, and went into the log-barn, followed by his two companions. Annersly noticed, with some amusement, the evident contempt with which Asa saw the Doctor prepare to aid him in his work, drawing on his gloves to preserve his hands from the rough contact of the pitchfork, as with no less goodwill, but with less powerful results, he aided the tall Ohioan to throw over the hay which lay stored in the barn. Charles took up a fork and offered to assist, and was told by Asa to "fire away."

"Are you from the old States, stranger?" said Asa, as he stopped on the hay to recover breath, after rolling nearly a quarter of a ton from the top of the heap. "Your friend there doesn't come from the old country, neither?"

Annersly's announcement of his companion's name and country was received with surpise and no friendly welcome.

"South Carolina! Burgoyne! Is it possible?" said the Doctor in amazement. "Good heavens! Can it be?"

"The wretched fellow as shot poor Miller on Saturday," said Asa. "Burgoyne—South Carliny—that *was* he, then."

"And I took the ball out of poor Miller, myself," said Dr. Seaward, in a kind of consternation.

"Burgoyne, is it? They've made him captain amongst them, now; why did the Pukes shoot him then?" said Asa, in a bewilderment which even Dr. Seaward's remark, that their wounded guest was only the brother of the Captain Burgoyne in question, could not enlighten for some moments.

"But this gentleman was going to join his brother," said Dr. Seward; "did he intend to become one of his troop?"

"No; Mr. Burgoyne desires to take no part whatever in the quarrels here," returned Annersly. "He has only arrived here to-day; and his object in coming," continued the imprudent and straightforward Englishman, "is to interfere in behalf of, and aid a fugitive slave. Have you heard of a young girl——?"

"Is it Irene Morton? the girl whom Foster brought over the border, then?"

asked Asa; while Dr. Seward repeated in astonishment — "Aid a fugitive slave!"

"That is she — where is she?" answered Charles, eagerly, to Asa. "Do you know where she is?"

"Oh! she's safe, I guess you needn't fear. She's where not one of the Pukes will lay a finger on her," replied Asa, throwing the last truss of hay behind him, and uncovering as he did so the corner of a large chest carefully stowed at one end of the barn, under the pile of hay. "Look here, Doctor! the rifles and the powder is all safe, I tell you; and the sooner we cover 'em in again the better. I guess the miscreants were speering for us, hidden in the hay; they're such sneaks themselves, they might think we'd be like to hide there as they would have done, but they han't nosed out the rifles yet."

"They can't have heard that there was a store here," said Dr. Seaward, "or they would have found them. But what do you know of this girl — is she safe?"

"I rather guess she is," said Asa, grimly; "she's at Bain's cabin, and the Pukes won't show themselves there, nor within thirty

miles of where they know old Brown and his boys to be; and the Carliny boys han't more pluck neither. Yes, the girl's safe enough, I reckon; and besides that, I heard Rogers say Mr. Maxwell was come again to take her North."

"To take her North;" Charles heard the words and turned away. Maxwell with her already! He ought not to regret it, he had been schooling himself for many weeks now to think of her as no longer his, as the bride of Maxwell; but nevertheless he had hoped to see her once again, to hear her speak again, without the obnoxious presence of her lover. He had even thought of being her escort back to the North, and to know now that Maxwell was already with her, to protect and defend her, and that she would care to see no other friend, was a sharp disappointment.

He left the stable, where Asa was still talking of Maxwell, and went into the house to find his sister, who was sitting by her husband.

"Poor Conny," he said, affectionately, as he saw her intense paleness, though she was perfectly calm, for fear of agi-

tating Chauncey; "I didn't expect there was all this in store for you, but it's only to be for a fortnight. He will be all right again, the Doctor tells me; and I have heard some news that are good, or at least——"

"About Irene, is it?" said Constance, eagerly, as he stopped, unable to say more.

"Yes—it's all right," said Charles, gulping down something in his throat. "Maxwell is with her, and they are going back to the North at once;" and without staying to see his sister's face, he turned away and left the room, trying to hum a tune.

In the mean time the little troop of Southerners, who had fled in a panic from the approach of the rescuers, and springing to horse had ridden off without waiting to see their antagonists, continued their journey across the prairie to the border of Missouri. Their courage returned as they left the farmhouse behind, and they could congratulate themselves upon having secured seven good horses, for those of the travellers had also fallen into their hands, with Dr. Seaward's, and they shouted a perfect song of triumph as they crossed the border and knew themselves to be among friends.

A small party of horsemen were in sight, riding towards them, and before it was quite dark the two groups met.

"Where from?" shouted James Saville, the leader of the returning party, as he reined up his horse.

"Right on the hemp!" replied the foremost stranger, adopting the watchword in common use among the partisans of "law and order" in the frontier wars, and derived from the custom prevalent amongst the Southern warriors, of carrying hemp in their button-holes, as an indication of their intention to hang every Free-soiler they encountered.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Ellsland?" responded Saville, riding forward to meet his companion in arms; "done anything to-day? We've brought back some good beasts. What's the news?"

"None, save that our new Captain means to make us work well, by heaven!" said Mr. Ellsland. "Have you had any fighting with the rebels?"

"Knocked down one or two of the cursed fellows," replied Saville. "Well, I'm glad Captain Burgoyne has spirit. What the

devil did Rawder mean by leaving a man who hasn't been six weeks here, over us?"

"It's not for you to complain, but for Myddleton here; but I tell you Burgoyne is a good leader, and Rawder knew his man when he left him in his place. Myddleton, tell these niggers they can't go on to-night. Their master must wait."

"What niggers?" asked Saville. "Where did you leave Captain Burgoyne and the troop?"

"He is on twenty miles or more, west. I meant to have gone to him this evening, but it's too late, we are tired. Oh, these niggers are two servants of Mr. Chauncey Burgoyne. He is come, they say, and is gone on to camp to see his brother, and the niggers are following him with his luggage."

"Well, we've had to shoot an impudent Free-soil rascal to-day," said Saville; "he was going on to Burgoyne too, but he chose to interfere with us, and got a taste of our lead accordingly."

"Serve him right, the cursed rebel!" said Ellsland; "they will learn at last." He was interrupted by one of the coloured

men, who, coming up to him, said with a look of alarm and anxiety:

"Mas'r Ellsland, mas'r, the horse they've took be the one my mas'r rode this morning."

"Your master? what horse?" said Ellsland, impatiently, and not without feeling some uneasiness from the evident and unfeigned consternation of the servant.

"Yes, mas'r — my mas'r — his horse — the one he went out on this 'ere morning. They say they've shot the gentleman as rode it."

"What! boy," exclaimed Ellsland, in a voice of thunder, and with a tremendous oath. "They say they've shot the man who was on it! Saville, do the fellows speak the truth?"

"Yes, it belonged to the fellow we shot," was the answer from two of the party, to whom Ellsland turned in consternation, and the servant added: "I know it was the horse my mas'r was ridin', and this here is my missis's. I saw them go off on 'em this morning."

"Saville, there was no lady there, was there?" faltered Ellsland, in a low voice,

as a terrible suspicion of the truth crossed him. Saville made no answer; he himself was dismayed, but others replied for him, and the slave, unrolling the cloak which was fastened to the saddle, pronounced it to be his master's without mistake.

"It's a lie made by this impudent dog!" exclaimed Saville, fiercely. "I'll get it out of him. Strip the d——d hound and lay it on him till he tells the truth," he cried, turning to two of his companions. They dismounted and seized the mulatto to execute his orders, but were stopped by Myddleton. Ellsland almost reeled in his seat; for a moment he covered his face with his hands, and then in a low threatening voice, said,

"You may thank God, James Saville, that I don't shoot you now, as you deserve; but keep out of Mavor Burgoyne's way, as you love your life. It's his brother you have murdered, and my dearest friend." His emotion choked his voice, and he could only draw his bridle sharply, and turn his horse.

"Stay, then stay, Ellsland, you will not go to Mavor Burgoyne to tell him this,"

cried Saville, grasping his rein; "you have no proof — there is no proof but the word of this cursed nigger — who says it was Burgoyne's brother? Stop! you shall not go to him; by ——, you shall not!"

"I am not going to him," replied Ellsland, in a voice husky with agitation, but unmoved by the sight of Saville's revolver already drawn. "No, you are a friend to our cause, and so I will let you go; but hell and thunder! Saville, where's the lady? You said she was there."

"Oh, she was all right, all safe, and there were people there — friends to her — all right," said Saville, hurriedly. "Ellsland, I could not help it, I did not know ——"

"Make your peace with Mavor Burgoyne as you can, I shall never meet you again, or ride in your company," said Ellsland. "Come with me, Myddleton," and striking his spurs into his horse, he galloped away towards the border.

"Give those confounded niggers two hundred lashes each," cried Saville, furiously. "What is to be done?" he said, to Myddleton, who stood undecided whether to go or stay.

"Hang it! I dont know. If Mavor Burgoyne hears of it he'll pay you for it, that's fact, but if you took him for a Free-soiler, did he know who you were, that is, does the lady know?"

"I don't know — should think not. What of it?"

"Why then," said Myddleton, "do as we've done before; lay the blame on the Free-soilers. Keep our own counsel, and let Mavor Burgoyne thank the rebels for it."

"That's it, you have it," said Saville, and turning to his companions, he called them all to listen, even stopping the punishment of Chauncey's slaves for a moment, and then telling them that if Captain Burgoyne once got an inkling of the truth, they were ruined men, he charged them to keep the secret, and declare they had taken Chauncey's horse from the party of Free-soilers who had murdered him.

This arranged, the party separated; Saville went to rejoin his colonel, and Myddleton with his companions went on to find Captain Burgoyne's company.

CHAPTER XII.

CHAUNCEY'S recovery was slower than either Dr. Seaward or Constance had expected, and though he soon insisted on leaving his bed, he remained an invalid, exhausted with fever and pain.

"Well, you don't do me credit, Mr. Burgoyne," said Dr. Seaward, one morning; "however, I've brought you a visitor, who is anxious to know how you are getting on."

Chauncey immediately recognised the stranger as being the Free-soil man who had directed him and Constance to the house of Dr. Seaward, as a good resting place. Rogers shook his hand heartily.

"Well, I guided you to a rough reception, it seems, when I sent you here; but I should think I put you in a fair way of learning all you wanted to know, stranger, eh?" and he laughed in genuine amusement. "It's not often we have a Southern

man asking us to explain the rights of our quarrel."

"I've seen proofs of the lawlessness of the pro-slavery men, but I have not yet learnt the necessity you had for opposing them first," said Chauncey.

"They did not wait for us to oppose them. It was enough that we were Free-state men. Why, I've seen a clergyman tarred and feathered, and sent down the river on a raft, because he said he was a Free-soiler. They were threatening to take our lives before we came into the country. The party I came with had four waggons, and we had to leave two behind us on the road, for the Border ruffians stole our horses in the night, and the next day came and told us that we should all be murdered if we went on. Well, we hadn't framed our house before these fellows came round us again, and pulled it down for us—we could not do anything—we had not two revolvers among us, much less rifles. However, we soon got them, for we saw what they meant to do; and we've been pretty much fighting ever since. They came, nearly two thousand of them, first into the country on our elec-

tion day, as perhaps you know, and voted for Whitfield, their own man. Then they came, five thousand of them, to choose our legislature for us; but they found we could not be held by any bogus legislature, and they came on us again to lay siege to Lawrence. We were drilling and marching for near three weeks, expecting they'd fight us every day—there were fifteen hundred of them then. They and our peace-loving men made peace somehow, and when they went off, we found we had promised submission. So we had, but to the Union, not to the bogus laws; and we soon had the Missourians on us again. Then came Buford, with his men from Georgia and South Carolina, burning our cornstacks, and stealing the horses. The regular troops helped them too, killing our men and ill-treating our women; it was time we had learned to fight for ourselves. Well, you see, sir, we mean to be a free state, and now, I think, we are one; and if you're going back to the South, sir, you may tell the pro-slavery men it's no use their vexing and annoying us, for they cannot prevent us being Free-soilers, while we know we are in the right."

Rogers continued talking with Chauncey and Annersly for some time, but Constance left the room, and went to find her hostess. She had, for the last two days, seen that Mrs. Seaward was suffering great though secret anxiety; and she now found that she had laid down her work, and gone out to the prairie. Here Constance followed her, and overtook her about a quarter of a mile from the house. She looked sad and depressed, and Constance heard her sigh painfully as they walked on.

"You must feel lonely at times, living here, with so few neighbours near you," Constance remarked, as they both stopped to look back at the farm-house.

Mrs. Seaward's eyes filled with tears. "Lonely?—yes, very lonely," she replied, "with only the graves of our friends near us. Two years ago there were so many of us, and now—there is nothing left of them."

"You speak of your own family," said Constance, "have you lost so many in that short time?"

"No, they were not our relatives—all of them," answered Mrs. Seaward, wiping away her gathering tears; "but we had

been friends for twenty years, and I think I loved the children almost as my own. When we came here, we resolved to remain neighbours, as we always had been—and they built their house in that valley beyond the hill, only a mile from ours, as you see. There are the ruins; and there, by the brook, are the graves. Three years ago the Missourian Border ruffians came upon us, they were burning and destroying all through the territory. We left our house, and went out on the prairie; but our friends would not fly, and there was a fight at their farm. Our house was burnt down early in the evening—we were wandering about all night in the snow—my youngest girl, poor child! she was with me then, she was ill and weak—and that cold winter night killed her. I felt it must all the time while we were trying to find a shelter for her. She died, poor dear child, before the spring came again." The mother stopped, her voice choked with tears, and for some moments she could not continue. At last, with an effort, she went on. "We found a hut at last, where we stayed the next day; and several of our neighbours,

who had been dispersed by the Missourians, joined us. Some of them accompanied my husband to our friends' house, to see what had become of them. Good God! what news they brought us back! The father and one son were dead, the other was dying; and the girls had been left defenceless to those ruffians. There were other men dead there—some whom we knew, and some were left wounded; but of our own friends——"

Mrs. Seaward could say no more, she turned away from her horror-stricken listener, and hid her face in her handkerchief.

"And your son is now fighting in another part of the territory, is he not?" asked Constance, seeking to lead her thoughts into a channel where there was room to hope still.

"Yes, he is gone with Montgomery; the Southern men had taken one of ours, and locked him into prison, and he was to be rescued. I heard it was done, and a man who passed here, some days since, told me my boy was safe then, but I have not seen him yet. I thought he would, perhaps, be here this evening."

This was the reason why she had left her work and wandered out on the prairie, poor mother! The winter day was already drawing to a close, and the air was sharp and bitter. They both stood looking over the plain before them, and listening for any distant sound, but there was none, and they were retracing their steps slowly homewards when Mrs. Seaward stopped and listened again, in eager anxiety. A far-off shout attracted even the less excited ears of Constance, and, joyfully declaring that it was her son, her companion went forward to meet him. A few minutes brought them to the young borderer, who, with his rifle on his arm, was returning home, unhurt, or, as he phrased it, ready to fight again for the right cause, if it were necessary.

"We rescued our man, I dare say you heard, mother; but there has been another brutal murder of one of our best men. Miller is dead; he was shot down by a ——"

"Hush! not now; don't say it!" interrupted his mother, pressing his arm quickly. "We know it already."

Young Seaward was silent, wondering

why the subject was forbidden; but as Constance, on nearing the house, quickened her pace, and he found himself alone with his mother, he said —

"Is she a relation of Miller, then? Poor fellow! it was a fortnight last Saturday. Rogers heard of it the next day. Rawder's men came round the house at night, and called to him to come out. He knew it might be a trick, and said so to his wife, but he came out to them, and they shot him as soon as he opened the door. The wretched Carolinian who led them fired first, and three or four others shot after him."

"We know it, James; your father was on his way to Osage, and Mrs. Miller sent to him, for her husband was not dead, though they left him for such. But your father says there was no chance he would recover. There was a doctor at Osage, though, so your father came home, and we have not heard whether Mr. Miller is yet dead or not."

"Oh, yes, he died three days afterwards. I've sworn to revenge his death on that Mavor Burgoyne, if ever it happen that I

meet him in fight," said the young man, in a lowered voice. "He is their captain now, they say, while Rawder is gone home. But is that lady any friend of Miller's?"

"No, but a relation of Captain Burgoyne." The young borderer started and stood still, looking at his mother in silent amazement, while she related to him the circumstances of Saville's attacking the house, and the subsequent assault on the stranger who came to the assistance of herself and her daughter.

"Well, it is strange, indeed, that my father should have dressed *his* wounds after doing the same for poor Miller. Well, mother, where is Lyddell? Is he at his cabin, or not? Mr. Maxwell, of Philadelphia, is looking for him, and has gone to Foster's to find him."

"Why, Lyddell has gone the other way to look for him; how unfortunate!" said Mrs. Seaward. "Now come in, James; and, mind, not a word of Miller's death or of Captain Burgoyne."

The day afterwards Annersly came in reading a newspaper, headed, in large capitals, "The Kickapoo Herald of Freedom

and Southern Rights," which he put into his sister's hand, directing her attention to one particular paragraph.

"*Brutal Assassination of a Southern Gentleman.*

"Another outrage and murder on the part of these rebellious Free-soilers. It is with the intensest grief and indignation that we have to record the diabolical murder, in cold blood, of another of our citizens, Mr. Chauncey Burgoyne, who has fallen a victim to the insatiate thirst of blood of these Free-soil tigers. This unfortunate gentleman had only arrived in Kansas territory the preceding day, accompanied by his young and lovely bride; but not even her presence could protect him from the barbarity of these Free-soil ruffians. The rebels deliberately murdered him, and have thus added yet another to the long list of outrages and crimes which the true citizens of the South have to avenge upon the transgressors."

"There! you see you are properly appreciated, and somebody will be punished

for your injuries, though it is not exactly the party to blame," said Charles, and he took it up and carried it to Chauncey, to read to him the announcement of his own murder. Chauncey asked, quickly, if they had taken care to report his safety to Mavor, as he knew his wife had to Chestnut Brook. Annersly assured him he had done so; "and it's fortunate I did," he added, "for he would have come, perhaps, to avenge your loss on the Free-soilers here, if he had not heard from me; and at Chestnut Brook they will have Constance's letter before they see, if they ever do see, this wretched newspaper. What are you looking at? Any news?"

"No news, only the opinion of some of my friends upon the struggle that is carried on in this Territory. I know the man, I believe, who has written it, for it is not the work of any pen in these Western States, though it purports to be so."

Annersly looked at the place indicated by Chauncey, and read aloud:—

"Congress must intervene to protect slavery in the Territories. Let us put our shoulder to the wheel and labour *earnestly*,

faithfully, and prudently, for the consummation of this constitutional necessity. Congress has the right, and is in duty bound to protect slavery in the Territories, until the people of a Territory may decide the question finally for the future State. If the people of a Territory fail to protect property invested in the person of a negro, they grossly violate equal rights."

The Englishman stopped—repeated the words, "equal rights," in a low voice, as if to himself, and commenced walking up and down the room, deep in thought. Chauncey sighed and said—

"It is more difficult for us to choose the right way than you know of, Charles."

"I know it is, but that does not make the right cease to be right," replied Annersly. "The way over the mountain may be rugged and steep, if you will, but, nevertheless, if it leads to the point where you want to go, you must take it, though it may make you footsore."

Chauncey made no rejoinder, and Charles continued, after a pause,—

"I dare say you feel sick, as I do, with hearing all that Rogers has told us to-day.

Well, the account of the sack of that village was enough to make even a stranger take up arms against those Southern ruffians; but one thing is plain, that if pro-slavery principles can train and produce such marauders and villains, the sooner the principles are extirpated the better for the country at large, not for the slaves only."

Chauncey was leaning his head painfully on his hands, and as Charles finished speaking, he exclaimed, "My poor country!"

"Which is your country, Chauncey?" said Annersly, quickly. "The United States or South Carolina?"

Chauncey made no answer, and before Annersly spoke again he was interrupted by the entrance of his sister, in whose face he saw evil tidings and great alarm.

"A man has just brought the report that a number of the Missourians are in our neighbourhood," she began.

"Not with any evil intent, I trust," said Charles, listening, however, with alarm to the sound of hurried voices in the adjoining room; and, dreading to hear his worst fears confirmed, he opened the door, and

joined the little household, who were consulting together in breathless haste. Young Seaward left them as Charles entered. He was going, his father said, to find assistance; for the borderer who had announced the proximity of the marauders, was of opinion that the farm-house was the special point of attack; and the doctor confessed his fear that there were too few combatants within call to make any long resistance. Annersly suggested that Mr. Chauncey Burgoyne's name might serve them, if they employed him as a mediator, but Dr. Seaward shook his head and replied that the bad faith of the Missourians was too well known for him to surrender on any terms or for any consideration. Annersly questioned whether it would not be prudent, in the face of such overwhelming odds, to abandon the farm-house, and fall back to some other point of resistance where they might find a reinforcement.

The farmer answered shortly, "No, it won't do, it could not be; if we were alone we might do it, but if they are with us," and he glanced at his wife and daughter, "we must not run the risk of being

attacked on the march—it will be our only chance to wait behind these walls for their coming."

"Well, doctor, they'll be here before it's dark," said Asa; "you go find Lyddell, he's come home, that's a providence. Rogers will be along directly, and Sykes with him, I reckon. I'll go and fetch them rifles and the powder—it's a good thing we've spare guns, for it saves time if some one'll load 'em whilst we fire. I dare say you'd be able to do that much," he added, with a look of patronising benevolence at Charles.

"Well, perhaps I might do as much," said Charles, drily; "there's no telling till one's tried."

Charles had become good friends with Asa, having been always ready during the past ten days to help him in his agricultural duties, and in his favour the Ohio man had relinquished certain prejudices against all foreigners in general, and Britishers in particular.

"Are you certain that Foster is coming?" inquired Dr. Seaward of the man who had lately joined them.

"Certain, he's coming over, and perhaps

he'll have a friend with him. I heard him saying so afore I started, and if he hears of the Pukes coming, he'll be along quick."

"I am going to find another neighbour," said the doctor, and he hastened away in a contrary direction to that taken by his son, while Annersly followed Asa to the hay-shed, to seek the spare rifles and the powder.

"Do you think there will be a real fight?" asked Charles, as he took a hayfork in hand, and prepared to uncover the arm-chest.

"Shouldn't wonder, they are forty strong, and yet they run sometimes like hares. A parcel of 'em came round Montgomery's house last month, while he was away, and fired into it. His wife, she set up a shout, as if she wasn't a bit scared, and so the Pukes thought there must be a lot of men there, and they scampered off. We'll have to open this here box here, I reckon,—it'll be too heavy to drag in. I wish we had this barn closer to the house, I do. I told the doctor it was just far enough to give the Pukes a shelter if they came. It will be ugly if they once get close in, for this shed will give them a fair

cover. Well, we'll meet 'em, and whip 'em too, I'm thinkin'. Here's the doctor come back, and Lyddell with him. I be glad to see you, Lyddell," continued Asa, shaking hands warmly with the new comer, whose slender frame and pale countenance were a strange contrast to the Ohio farmer's, and gave some colour of reason to the kindly contempt with which Asa always allotted the light work to his city-born friends. A few minutes later young Seaward joined the party, accompanied by two other men, whom he had called from their peaceful work in the field to take part in the coming struggle. They were, however, well armed, and they handled their rifles in a manner that suggested a long experience in the warfare of the Kansas border.

"Are we to wait for them here?" asked Lyddell; "shall we not go out and meet them on the prairie?"

"If we had four or five rifles as good as yours, we might," said Dr. Seaward; "but there's only you and Asa who have a gun that will carry and hit at half a mile, and for us it is better to lie behind walls."

Lyddell shook his head. "If the doctor would take my advice," he said to Asa, "he'd leave the house and go out and meet them; we could keep them at a distance, as we have done before; but when it is dark they'll come round us, and pour in their shot upon us when we can't see to aim."

"I'm of your mind," replied Asa, "if there was more of us had far-ranging rifles, or could use 'em if they had; but Rogers is no shot, and if Hughes can hit at four hundred yards, it's all he can do. No, the doctor's right, I reckon, in getting ready to wait for 'em here."

The doctor and his companions were meantime making active preparations for withstanding the attack. Mrs. Seaward had brought in several pails of water from the brook that ran near the house, and then returned into the back room, where her daughter and Constance were seated at a table preparing a fresh store of cartridges, aided by Chauncey, who had not been considered capable of heavier work. Mrs. Seaward unlocked a press that stood on one side; her daughter sighed, and Con-

stance looked up inquiringly, but understood the sigh as Mrs. Seaward took out a large piece of linen, and tore it across into many strips.

"Lay everything your father may want, Mary, on this press; it will be ready for him," she said; "and get the lint and other things as quickly as you can. No one knows how soon we may want them."

The farm-house was but a large log-hut, divided into two rooms, and a portion had been separated from the larger one for Chauncey during his illness. Even with this corner cut off, however, the kitchen was still large, and a good-sized window close to the door, with a smaller one at the side, only lighted it sufficiently on that December afternoon. A second door led to the stable, and a rough ladder fixed on one side formed a communication with the loft, which served the purposes of a granary, and where Charles and Asa had stretched themselves to sleep every night, in the centre of a circle of corn-barrels and roots stored up for the winter. As there were many small holes and apertures in the roof and under the eaves of the loft, the Doctor

pronounced it unnecessary to waste time in cutting loop-holes for observation or firing through, and concentrated the energy of his companions on fortifying the lower part of the house. Every mattress was brought and placed against the windows, to shelter as much as possible the persons of the defenders, and heavy bars of wood were prepared to brace and strengthen the barricade in case the enemy should attempt to carry the place by storm. If they should do so, Annersly thought the case was hopeless, for by report the invaders outnumbered the garrison many times, and he heartily echoed Dr. Seaward's hope that they might receive some reinforcement before the enemy came up.

Two hours, however, had passed, and there was still no sign of their friends; but as the Doctor took a last glance out of the window he was boarding up, he exclaimed, in tones of intense relief:

"Here is Foster, and some one with him also."

"That's good news, indeed!" said Annersly; and he was leaving the room to tell Constance of this addition to their

strength, when Foster and his companion entered, and Annersly heard, with a start of painful surprise, the name of Mr. Maxwell.

"Edward! do I see right? is it you?" cried young Lyddell, joyfully. "I have been looking for you everywhere."

"And I have been over to Lawrence to find you, and then to Salt Springs," said Maxwell, grasping his hands warmly. "I began to think I should never find you."

"It is four years since I saw you at Boston," replied his friend. "I never thought our next meeting would be in Kansas."

"How's your sister?" asked Maxwell.

"Oh, very well indeed," answered Lyddell; "she is married, and most happily. Do you remember Johnson Hargrave?"

"Was he the eldest son of old Morley Hargrave?"

"Not the eldest — oh yes! he would be the eldest that you knew of; but there was another I used to know — we were boys together at school. He was lost — drowned in the Mississippi, as they suppose, many

years ago. Yes, Johnson Hargrave is the one you knew, and ——"

"I am sorry to interrupt two friends so long parted, now they have met again," said Dr. Seaward, "but time is pressing. Will you help me barricade this window, Mr. Annersly?"

Maxwell caught the name, and looked at the Englishman with some evident interest. Charles and his sister resembled each other much in feature, and Edward was struck with his likeness to Constance, while he said to himself that it was impossible that the stranger before him could be her brother; but Annersly immediately solved his doubt by drawing nearer and speaking.

"Yes, sir, I am Charles Annersly. Is Miss Morton still in Kansas?"

"Yes, she is; did you know of her being here?" answered Maxwell, in astonishment; but before Charles could reply, Constance, followed by Chauncey, entered the room. Maxwell hastened towards her with expressions of the greatest surprise. She saw at the first glance that he was still ignorant of all that could prevent his meeting her or Chauncey with pleasure. He spoke

of the never-to-be-forgotten kindness of Mrs. Burgoyne, and of Irene's gratitude and his own — talked of his own determination to arrange matters with Colonel Burgoyne — told them that Irene was then only waiting for his return to go to the North with him; and before he had had time to thank Chauncey for his supposed good offices, there was a general movement among his companions, by which their conversation was interrupted.

Chauncey withdrew from the neighbourhood of Maxwell; he was pale and agitated, as Constance saw. Dr. Seaward noticed it likewise, but naturally attributed it to his patient's weakness, and observed:

"It is no good for you to join us, Mr. Burgoyne. You are a non-combatant, and quite unserviceable."

"Will not my name be of some service with the enemy? Shall we try, though I am useless as a soldier?" said Chauncey again, resting himself on his rough sofa, from which, however, the mattresses had been removed, to fortify the window.

"We could but try," said Lyddell; "shall we offer to parley with them, Doctor? Mr.

Burgoyne is of South Carolina; his name may be of use."

"It might be if they were the South Carliny Boys," said Asa; "but the Pukes won't care a cent for his name, I reckon. I think, Doctor, that this here door, prised off its hinge, would fix this window first-rate, d'ye see?"

"You are right, perhaps," said Seaward, as Asa appeared, furnished with a small crowbar, and, with Annersly's assistance, lifted the door from its hinges, and carried it to the window of the back room, to serve as a partial screen against the enemy's shot.

"Foster, we've all agreed to make you captain," said the Doctor, after a few words of consultation with the others; "you know more of this than we do, and we can trust you better than ourselves."

"Well, I have seen a few fights, I shouldn't wonder," replied Foster, examining his rifle, and loading it; and he proceeded, with a quiet air of authority, to assume the direction of the party, dispatched a scout to watch for the arrival of the enemy, assigned every combatant his

respective post, inspected the ammunition, and had just guessed they'd do, when young Seaward entered, announcing that the marauders, from thirty to forty in number, were advancing rapidly to the farm, and that the little cabin Lyddell had just abandoned was already in flames.

"Rogers and Sykes, you go up into the loft, and fire from there," said Foster, dividing his little company into order; "Mr. Maxwell, you and Lyddell take that window, and we shall have the front. Here they come! forty of 'em."

The Missourians had halted two furlongs from the door, and some were even dismounting. It was evident they had no intention of passing by the house, and Foster drew a long breath, as he observed:

"They mean to have revenge for Fort Scott*, and they know our weakness, or they would not come so close."

"Use me either as a prisoner of war, to treat with, or as a mediator, as you think best," said Chauncey; "I think my name might do something as a mediator."

* Fort Scott had been taken by Montgomery but three weeks before this time.

"I think it would," said Lyddell. "Shall we try, Doctor?"

Dr. Seaward said nothing; Foster shook his head.

"Shall I go out to them?" said Chauncey.

"No, no, you are worth more to us in than out," said Rogers. "Here, Foster, shall I go out, and say we have a Southerner here, a prisoner, and will bargain their retreat with his liberty?"

"They wouldn't keep faith if they did have him out; but you can use his name," said Foster. "We will cover you with our rifles, and mark any man who lays a finger on his piece while you are out; only mind, I won't hear of terms if they come nearer; if they promise fair, they must fall back. Mind, fifty yards nearer, and we shall fire," he added, as Rogers, tying a white handkerchief to his ramrod, opened the door and went out.

The Missourians gave a yell of triumph as the Free-soiler appeared, and regardless of the little white sign of amity, one rifle was instantly levelled and fired; the shot passed within a few inches of his head, and Rogers

sprang back into the house. Dr. Seaward levelled his rifle, and fired a return shot as three or four bullets rattled on the posts and lintel of the door.

"To your places, every one of you!" cried Foster, discharging his own piece through the opening left at the top of the window, which Asa had barricaded with pillows and mattresses. "Now we're in for it!"

It was growing dusk outside, and within the blocked-up windows were unable to lighten the room; but this was an advantage to the garrison, as the enemy was still clearly in view, while their own forms were undistinguished at the apertures left to aim through. It needed, however, but little skill to aim at these openings, and several bullets struck the barricaded windows where the Free-soilers stood.

"Another mattress, if there is one, to that door," said Foster, in a tone that was heard above the rattle of the rifles and the crash of the falling glass. "We shall have the bullets in among us like rain, if nothing but that plank is before us;" and to confirm his words a rifle ball cut through the door, and entered the opposite wall.

"Fire again," said Foster, as he turned to mount the stick ladder that led to the loft. "Lyddell, you and your mate draw that chest out against the door, and put the ladies where they will be out of reach of the shots."

Maxwell and Lyddell gave their loaded rifles to the others at the windows, and exerting all their strength, succeeded in forcing the huge chest against the door, and at the same time counselled the women to withdraw to a corner that was sheltered from the shot. They, however, did not avail themselves of the suggestion, but remained unflinchingly aiding Chauncey to reload the spare rifles, thus enabling the men to fire their shots in rapid succession. Mrs. Seaward stood near her son, trying to control the reckless youth against useless exposure of himself at the window.

"Sykes is holding his fire," said Foster; "I must see that he is not wounded." He disappeared into the loft, and they heard his heavy footsteps cross the floor above them, after which three or four shots followed from above.

"Fire, all of you!" he cried to those

below, and his order was instantly obeyed; those who first discharged their rifles falling back to allow the others to take their place. This unexpected volley produced a good effect on the enemy; they were already wavering, and some now turned their horses. Three or four still raised their rifles and fired, and young Seaward started back with a cry of pain as one of the balls reached him. Maxwell caught his rifle from him, and taking his stand at the window, sent a parting shot after the retiring enemy.

CHAPTER XIII.

"The Lord be praised! They are gone for the present," said Foster, descending into the room, "but we shall have them again. Is any one hurt?"

"It's not much, mother," said young Seaward, wincing, however, as his father examined his wound. "I can still aim, if you will load for me."

"I'll go and see if the wretches are gone off, really, or if they're not prowling round, waiting for us to look out," said Foster. "None of you follow me, but just rest while you can, for we've not seen the end of them."

It was now quite dark, and the Doctor lit a candle for his operations; but this Foster ordered to be extinguished before he unfastened the door, lest his own person should, by that bright background, become a mark for a distant rifle. Annersly, who, while speaking to his sister, had lost Foster's

general command for all to remain in the house, followed him from the door. The air was clear and frosty, but there was no moon, and no object could be distinguished beyond fifty yards on the gradually rising ground before them. Foster listened intently for a few minutes, but there was nothing to be heard except the creaking of the branches of the trees by the rivulet as the wind swept over them, and the long howl of the wolves in the distance. Foster took his way to the wooden barn, and stood considering it for a minute.

"I wish it were fairly down," he muttered. If the Pukes once get behind it, we are sold. They can throw in their lead on us at their own pleasure. I must see if they're really off now. I'm going to look out yonder; we'll have to lie close though, if we meet them."

Charles professed a desire of accompanying the borderer on his perilous walk, and they pursued their way, without speaking, towards the ridge of the bluff before them. Its outline was clearly defined against the sky; but the house was now undistinguishable to their eyes, except by the faint

streaks of light that gleamed through the narrow spaces left in the upper part of the windows.

"They hadn't ought to have lit the candles," said Foster, impatiently. "A child could fire at that light, and hit it. Ah! here we are—there are the Pukes located in that bottom, waiting till we take down our shutters, I suppose," he added, laughing, as he pointed out the light of a fire, round which Annersly could distinguish a number of dark, moving figures. Foster raised his rifle to his shoulder, as if half tempted to fire it at the beacon, but he dropped it again, saying:

"No, it wouldn't be possible to shoot among 'em, to scare 'em, without risking killing some of 'em; and if they are going to make tracks home peaceable, I wouldn't wish to hurt them."

Annersly, it must be confessed, thought this act of forbearance misplaced, having a decided wish to see the confusion and astonishment which would have ensued among the Missourians, if a ball had whizzed into their council fire; but Foster claimed his attention.

"I'll leave you here to watch them awhile, while I go on to that bluff to see if there's more on 'em further on. If they move, you fall back to the house." But as he ceased speaking, both he and Annersly heard, with alarm, the sound of a horse's hoofs at full gallop; it was rapidly approaching the place. Foster crouched down on the grass, keeping his rifle ready for use, and signing to his companion to do the same. The horseman soon appeared, riding furiously on, but shaping his course directly for the cottage.

"Well, he can't be a pro-slave man, for he's straight down to the cabin," said Foster, half to himself. "Let's follow him in. He's brought us some bad news or other."

The little garrison had not neglected to secure the bolts, after their commander left them on his reconnoitring expedition. As he closed the door, and shut the twilight out, the room was left in darkness, as the fitful blaze on the hearth sank down into the embers, springing up again suddenly for a minute to show them the disordered room and the barricaded windows. Mrs. Seaward shuddered—the Doctor laughed gaily.

"We will have the lights," he said. "We are not to be kept in the dark because our captain is gone out for a walk; and we'll have something to eat now, for it will be many hours perhaps before we can have a bit, if we miss it. Mrs. Burgoyne, I hope this is going to end all well; and if the worst comes to the worst, you and your husband must plead for the poor prisoners, you know."

"Such of us as will be left," muttered Asa. "I'll not be a prisoner while there's a bead left in my pouch."

Mrs. Seaward and her daughter had now hastily covered the table with a supply of cold provisions, and invited the others to come and take refreshment.

"Ah! we had better eat while we can, for we may have work yet to-night," said Dr. Seaward, "but we may be left in peace after all, and we hope it will be so. I believe the enemy is fairly gone. Well, Mr. Burgoyne, this is a specimen of the sort of life Missourians have led us these last three years and more. I suppose you think we deserve it for being rebels and resisting the laws of the country."

"I am a Southerner, and I have always believed my own party were right hitherto," replied Chauncey; "but there is not one who wishes success to your cause more than I now do; and yet, I fear, it is a sinking cause—you will never be able to stand against the power the South can bring against you."

"I don't know; the right is on our side, and with that we may prevail in time," answered the Doctor. While he yet spoke, the sound of the horse approaching the house roused the attention of all. "Up with your rifles!" cried Asa, stationing himself at the window. "They are here again. Where is Foster?"

"And where is Charles?" exclaimed Constance in terror, springing towards the back door, by which her brother had left them. Chauncey's voice recalled her to prudence, and she came back, while the new comer outside the house called loudly on Dr. Seaward to open the door.

"Shall we do so? it may be a trick," said Rogers, doubtfully.

"We shall be shot through, like poor Miller, if we do," said the master of the

house. "He says he is a friend, and yet, if he be a Missourian, he has probably his pistol ready for the first who looks out."

"Unbar the door and invite him to come in amongst us, if he is a friend," said Chauncey, rising and coming forward.

"Not a bad idea though; open the door and ask him in," said Asa. "Oh, here he comes—he isn't afraid of us then."

The stranger entered the room the moment the bolts were withdrawn—his dress was disordered with rapid riding, and his voice rough with excitement. "Make all fast," he cried as he closed the door. "The Pukes are after me now. I'm come from Salt Springs, to Foster and Mr. Maxwell."

"What is it—what is wrong?" exclaimed Maxwell, hurrying forward, as a presentiment of evil crossed him, and but too justly, for the answer was:

"They've been round the cabin and killed Whatman, and they've taken the lady off with them."

A faint shriek of horror from Constance interrupted the speaker, while Maxwell staggered back as if struck by a shot.

"Who by? who are they? Have they

taken her as a prisoner or as a slave?" asked Chauncey, in breathless excitement, as he grasped the stranger's arm.

"Which way have they gone?" said Maxwell, in a voice trembling with agony, while others broke in.

"Who are they? Is it the Missourians?"

"It's the South Carolina and Alabama men," was the reply. "They were under Myddleton."

A low exclamation burst from Chauncey, and Constance sank back into a chair, covering her face with her hands. Maxwell said nothing, he was loading his pistols in desperate haste, and his look was that of a madman, while the messenger of evil continued:

"They say that some one claimed her as a slave, and they would take her over the border without waiting for him. I heard it from Whatman's wife, who came to my cabin, and sent me off to you."

"Over the border are they gone?" said Maxwell, in a low voice, calm even in his agony, as he lifted up his rifle and prepared to leave the house.

A deep flush had risen to Chauncey's

face, and, taking up a revolver from the table, he followed him. Maxwell was already unfastening the door, but the Doctor seized his arm.

"You can't go now, the ruffians are all round us—we must drive them off first before we can venture out with a chance of life. You *must* not go—it is useless madness," he continued, placing his back against the door, so as to prevent Maxwell from unclosing it.

"Besides she's over the border by now," said the man who had brought the news. "The fellows were well mounted, and meant to be there quickly."

"Heaven help the girl!" said Seaward.

Rogers drew Maxwell back from the door, saying, in an authoritative tone—

"It's no use trying to go now. We'll help you save the girl, but we must get these fellows off first."

"Edward, we shall find her, do not fear, man," said Lyddell, taking his friend's arm. "We'll ride after her, and have her back by to-morrow evening."

Chauncey had drawn back from the others, and stood near the window; his

face was turned from the light. His wife came up to him and took his hand in hers.

"Constance!" he exclaimed, in a low and faltering voice, "if that poor girl is lost—if she is taken back, it will be my doing."

"Oh! Chauncey, Chauncey, don't say that," said Constance. "It is not your fault; you did not send her to Chestnut Brook. Don't say that, dearest, for God's sake. She will be rescued."

"Yes, she may be rescued; I trust to God we may do it," replied Chauncey; "but if the worst comes to the worst, it is on my head."

Constance tried to answer, but knew not how; then other voices broke in upon them.

"Open the door; quick, quick!" cried the tones of Foster from without; and as the bolts were hastily withdrawn, he and Annersly hurried in. "They're on us now—get all ready, for they're close in."

"Fetch up the horses," said Rogers, "we won't have them stolen;" and disregarding Foster's expostulations, he hastened out to the stable, to bring in the horse that had been ridden by the borderer who first an-

nounced the approach of the enemy to them. The horse also that had arrived a few moments before from Salt Springs was still outside the door, fastened by the bridle to the wall; and both the animals were now led, with much persuasion and difficulty, into a little shed close to the house where tools and ploughs had been kept, and were there firmly secured.

"Get your rifles, and keep cool," said Foster. "They're coming on. Never mind the horses; we've other things to think of. There are some here of us as won't see the morning, I guess."

There was an impressive solemnity in his voice as he spoke that struck on the ears of all present; and for an instant there was silence in the room, while Dr. Seaward said —

"We have a good cause, and I think there is not one of us who is not ready to lay down his life cheerfully in it."

"Amen!" said one of the borderers. No one else spoke; but after a minute the young men returned to their preparations with an air of quieter and greater determination than they had yet worn during the

struggle. Each combatant took his former post at his loophole, and waited the attack. Foster extinguished the candle which had been lighted, and ordered the protecting mattresses to be raised higher in front of the windows.

"We can do nothing against them, now," he said; "we cannot see a hundred yards, and they will fire as they like on us."

"We must prevent their passing by us, and taking us in flank, if we can," said Seaward.

"If they should get into the stable, they'll have it their own way," said Foster; "they'll do it too."

A crash of bullets against the wall and door, and the loud report of their enemy's rifles, answered him; and several balls penetrated the apartment. One found its victim, and Lyddell fell to the ground.

"Now, they're on us, and God help us!" said Rogers. Chauncey caught up Lyddell's rifle as it dropped from his hand, and took his place by the side of Annersly.

"What! you come to join us?—your hand can't be steady enough yet," said Charles.

"I am not sure that it is; but in this darkness any shot may tell," replied Chauncey, as he took his aim.

"Keep out of the shot, Constance," said Charles, hurriedly, as his sister came to bring a supply of ammunition to Chauncey; a dangerous office, as the bullets were passing through the window every moment. Chauncey drew her back, placing her near himself, but close to the wall, where she was secure, and sheltered by the barricade.

"Fire to the left of them, some of you," cried Foster. "They will be trying to go round and take us at the back: fire across their march, at a venture."

"It's no use, if we do," said Rogers; "it's only a chance if a ball hits them in the dark." He took his aim, however, to the left of the enemy, and several of the rest fired in the same direction. The result could not be told, for the forms of their adversaries were undistinguishable, and they could only fire at random. The two or three experienced marksmen held their own fire until they could see the flash of their opponents, and aiming at it felt convinced

they had disabled one or two of their foes. It was easy, however, for a number of the Missourians to pass round the house at some distance, and it was impossible to prevent their moving as they chose about the farmstead. Their only hope was, that a few chance shots fired in the direction of their road might wound one of them and deter the others. Several shots were therefore fired, but without any effect; and in three or four minutes a rifle ball came through the window in their rear, to announce the presence of the enemy on that side.

"We ought to have placed a guard in the stable, to keep them off," said Foster; "but it's too late now."

"Is it too late now, Captain?" said Asa; "could not one or two of us get out there, and send a few shots among the fellows? I'll be ready to go out for one."

Foster forbade the attempt. There was hardly a probability that any two men could cross the yard in safety; for the balls came in an unceasing tempest against the house, and at the short distance from which they were now fired the wooden door that

Asa had placed before the window offered no resistance to their passage, and they entered at each end of the room, burying themselves in the walls, and striking the furniture on every side of the garrison. Rogers was wounded, but not so as to prevent his holding his rifle, and Constance saw blood on Annersly's sleeve.

"Something must be done to stop this firing," said Foster; "give me a light!" and, laying down his rifle he groped, through the darkness and the wreathing smoke, for the candles, and carrying them into the next room placed them on the table; and as soon as they were alight before the window he retreated from that room, while the Missourians, deceived by the *ruse*, immediately directed their fire upon the other window, and for a few moments the besieged enjoyed a temporary relief.

"Do you think they'll come and attack us hand to hand?" asked Constance, as she brought Chauncey a glass of water.

"I fear they will; if they know our weakness, they certainly will," he answered; but Seaward overheard him, and said,

"No, they won't; not yet at least.

While their powder lasts, they'll prefer to shoot from a distance. They wouldn't have been so bold had there been a moon and light enough for us to fire by. How is Mr. Lyddell?" he asked of his wife, who came from the corner where the wounded man had been carried out of reach of the shot.

"Going," she answered, but in a tremulous whisper; for she feared to damp the courage of the combatants by the announcement of the first death amongst them. She drew Maxwell, however, to the side of the dying man; but none of the others perceived that Edward was gone from his window, or suspected that Lyddell's hurt was serious, even after he lay dead near them.

The shot had again begun to fly into the room.

"They do not think of offering quarter," said Dr. Seaward, "nor would I take it while we have a chance left," he muttered, as he glanced at their female companions. "If any of us are alive by daylight——"

"Here is the moon coming at last," cried Rogers. "Now these gentlemen must draw

a little further off, if they wish to be out of our aim. Mr. Burgoyne, you seem to be a good shot; come to this hole and draw upon them."

As the moon rose, and gradually lighted the prairie, the idea of their greater danger seemed to strike the Missourians. The moonlight suffered every object within a furlong to be visible, and two or three good shots, fired by Chauncey and Asa, convinced them that such close quarters with their foes would no longer be advisable. They fell back to a safer distance, and their bullets no longer told with the same frightful effect upon the defences of the garrison.

"Well, they'll hardly want to lie out there, popping away till morning," said Asa; "I shouldn't wonder if they went off for a bit; perhaps altogether."

Asa was not mistaken; the shots became fewer, and, apparently, were only sent to inform the Free-soilers that they were not yet victorious. At last there was a long intermission, and Foster said,

"I believe they're riding off, I do."

"Yes, they are moving," answered one

of the borderers, who was attentively listening at the window; "I hear the horses trotting; they're going."

"God be praised, then!" said Foster, laying down his rifle; "fire another shot or two, though, some of you."

Another discharge of rifles echoed over the prairie, and it was unanswered; the Missourians were gone.

Chauncey threw down his rifle, and caught Constance in his arms.

"Let's go and see how far the wretches are, and if the stables are right," said Foster, and he left the room, followed by several of his companions. Chauncey remained with Constance.

"You are safe now, my darling," he murmured, "I thank God for that. This day makes me a Free-soiler, an abolitionist, if need be."

"Oh, Chauncey, if it were so, thank God, indeed," answered Constance, with tears of joy; "if I could love you better than I do now, it would be then, but you are hurt——"

"No, I am not. This day will, I trust, be the turning point of my life. God bless

you, my darling! I will deserve your love more than I have ever done yet."

"But you are hurt, Chauncey, you are indeed; there is blood on your forehead."

"Is there? I do not feel it, so it is not of any consequence; don't wipe it away, love, it must be my baptism into a better life, for now I have broken with the South — at least with slaveholding. Is Charles hurt? I think he is a little."

"Charles, dearest, can I not do anything for your arm now?" said Constance. "Is it very painful?"

"No, not very, it's growing rather stiff, but it doesn't signify — but look there," he exclaimed, directing his sister's eye to Maxwell; "something is wrong there."

Constance saw that Maxwell was leaning against the window, and apparently watching the figures moving in the room, but his eyes were fixed, his countenance fearfully pale, and he sank fainting to the ground as Chauncey reached him.

"Good heaven! I feared he was hurt some time ago, but I trust to God it's nothing dangerous," said Charles, as Chauncey half raised Maxwell, and supported

him in his arms. Dr. Seaward knelt down by the side of the wounded man.

"Oh, it is not severe — it is not dangerous, is it?" said Constance, eagerly, "not fatal? Oh, say the worst at once — he will live?" she asked in a faltering voice, as she saw the grave look of the surgeon.

"Not an hour," replied Seaward, "the bleeding is internal — he is dying."

"No, no, you must be mistaken. Look, he is recovering," said Chauncey.

Maxwell's lips moved, his eyes opened, and for a moment he forgot what had passed; then reviving to consciousness, he murmured: "Irene, dearest, is it you?" but recollection returned with sense, and as Constance, trembling with agitation, tried to speak —

"Oh, I know all," he answered, "I know. My poor darling, and I cannot go after her. Where is Foster? He brought her here safely, he will save her now."

"Save her! where from? what is it?" exclaimed Annersly, in consternation, as he heard the words. "What does he mean? where is she?"

"She's taken," replied the Doctor, in a low voice, as he rose to his feet again.

"Taken! what do you mean?" cried the Englishman—"but not——? we can rescue——?"

"Hopelessly gone, I fear," answered Seaward; "probably going to Missouri at once, as hard as horse can trot."

Annersly fell back a step from the light, and covered his face with his hands.

"I can save her, Mr. Maxwell," said Chauncey. "I can recover her from these robbers."

"You do not know what you promise," said Maxwell, with a faint groan; "no claim, no money, will do it."

"By force then," replied Chauncey. "I do know the difficulty, but I swear to you that I will save her. I will bring her back here. So God help and pardon me, I will bring her back."

Maxwell had little suspicion of the strong motives Chauncey had to keep this promise, but he heard his voice tremble as he spoke, and saw by the expression of his face that poor Irene would be rescued if it was humanly possible. He tried to speak, but the effort was useless.

"We are wasting time, Dr. Seaward,

will you not see to his wound?" said Constance, hurriedly.

"It's no use, he is going," said Seaward, and Constance saw it was true. Maxwell's lips still moved, but no sound was heard. His eyes were still fixed on Chauncey, but they were glazing. Chauncey took Maxwell's hand in his, and bending down, said:

"Yes, Maxwell, I swear it; by the living God, I swear, I will rescue her." Maxwell grasped his hand tightly for an instant — then, as his hold relaxed, a faint sound (Chauncey thought it was Irene's name) crossed his lips — and all was over.

CHAPTER XIV.

"We have lost two of the truest friends of freedom in this territory to-day," said Foster, as, two hours later, he stood by the bed where the body of Maxwell lay beside that of his friend Lyddell. "However, it's what all of us may expect any day, and we must be ready for it."

Foster had stationed a sentinel to keep watch against any unexpected return of their enemies; but these had evidently retreated southward. There was no longer any danger to be apprehended, and the borderers were taking down the barricades of the windows and removing the defences from the doors.

"Yes, the ruffians have gone, after doing us all the mischief they could," said Foster. "We are clear of them, and we shall know to-morrow if they've done any hurt to the folks near us."

Chauncey was speaking earnestly with

his wife, and he now turned to Foster, and said:

"Can you tell me where I shall find men to go with me in quest of the girl, for I am going after her as soon as it is light."

"What, to ride after the Missourians, and hope to get her back? You can't do it; no one can," answered Foster, in amazement. "They will be in Missouri before it can be done."

"I am going as soon as the day dawns, nevertheless," said Chauncey, resolutely, "whether I have one man or two. You will come with me," he added, as Annersly came forward.

The Englishman nodded acquiescence. "You can claim her as your property," he remarked, forcing himself to speak with difficulty. "Yes, I will come with you."

"There is not a chance of saving her," said Foster; "if there were, I'd go after her, poor girl; but there is not a possibility."

"We are going," said Chauncey. "If there are brave men, who will go with us, we shall be glad of them. If not, we go alone."

"And what can you do for her?" asked Foster. "I'd go help you fight the rascals, but we are so near the border that they'll

have got her safe in jail before we can follow them, and then where are you?"

"You do not understand," interrupted Annersly. "Mr. Burgoyne's family has a legal claim on her, and if she is once given over to the authority of the law, he can effect her release. Well, Chauncey, I'll follow you, if no one else will."

"Stay a bit. I'll go with you," said Foster; "else, if you should came up with the rascals alone before they get to the frontier, they'd shoot you before you can talk of claims. I'll go with you, I know, one, and if we go and let Jesse Whatman know that they've killed his brother, he'll come with us to have revenge on the villains."

"Let us go over to find him at once," said Chauncey; "we have no time to lose."

"But, Mr. Burgoyne, what are you going to do? Do you mean to set on the rascals, or to go up to claim her as your slave?" asked Foster.

"I shall do either, whichever may seem best at the time, or offer to purchase her from them," answered Chauncey; "if we were men enough, we might fight, but by myself I can only rely on proving that she

belongs to me, or on the high price that I can offer as a bribe to the ruffians."

"Well, I'll go with you then, and I guess I can find some more as will go too," said Foster.

"I and Asa will come with you, Foster," said Rogers; "we promised Mr. Maxwell we would go after her, and we will, if you are to be captain, but not else."

"Well, we'll send round now and see what horses we can find," said Foster, "and who will go with us. I'll ride myself over to Whatman, and fetch him, and any other who may be near. The rascals we have been fighting have well gone off southward, and I shan't fall in with them. Asa, you shall go over to Smithson's, and tell them there what has happened, and see if any will come with us from there, and tell Smithson to let you have a spare horse, and the side-saddle he has for his wife, we shall want it to bring the girl back, I guess."

"And let the farmers know that I shall account for any injury their horses may sustain, and their own loss of time," said Chauncey, but Foster stopped him saying:

"Men who bring their own lives in their hands don't care for their horses, I guess!"

And in a lower tone he added, "Don't remind them that the girl is a slave; many think she is claimed wrongfully, and that she's a white woman all the time, and you'd better let it be thought so now you want to find plenty to go after her. Well, I shall come back with Whatman," he concluded, addressing Asa; "we'll be here by daylight; so you and those you meet come to join us at the brook south of here. Now I'm going — it's well we have two horses safe," and he left the house, followed by Asa, well armed, and prepared for a long ride.

Chauncey turned to the bed where Maxwell lay, and remained long looking at the features now fixed in death, but bearing still the expression of the terrible anxiety which Maxwell had suffered in his last moments stamped upon them. It was little more than a year since he had first met Maxwell, and defied him to incur again the vengeance of the South, and a bitter feeling came over him as he reflected it was his own cruelty to Irene that had brought Maxwell to Kansas to receive his death-wound. Dr. Seaward drew near, and lifting the cloth from the face of Lyddell re-

mained for a few moments thinking as deeply as Chauncey, but without his bitterness and cause for self-condemnation. He covered his friend's face again, and addressing the Carolinian, said:

"I did not expect, when I went to ask him about the seed corn, that this night was to end all for him. Poor Lyddell! but it's what every Free-soil man must expect, and look on as perhaps his own fate any day. May we be as well prepared for it."

"But *he* was more than a Free-soiler," said Chauncey, turning again to look at Maxwell.

"Ah! Mr. Maxwell, so he was. He was a pioneer, a leader to show us what to do, replied Seaward, earnestly. His whole life was given to showing to those whom self-interest blinded to the truth what was just; he was one of the apostles of our faith, and has died a martyr for it. I do not know, Mr. Burgoyne, if, after reflection, you will throw in your lot with us, as you talked of doing an hour ago, but you may see it is no light sacrifice. We are like the first Christians, we can offer those who join our cause nothing but public insult and hatred during life, and perhaps a sudden

death. You must think of this before you settle among us."

"I shall think of it, but I shall be a Free-soiler in future," replied Chauncey. "I do not know if I shall come amongst you. I shall go, or remain where I can be of most service, but I shall be a slaveholder no longer."

"You have counted the cost?" said Dr. Seaward, rather doubtingly, for he remembered he spoke to a Southern man.

"I have counted it," said Chauncey, glancing towards Constance, who sat at a little distance, her hands clasping her knees, and intently watching her husband. She rose, and came to him, as Seaward went away.

"My own dear true love," he said, as he put his arm round her, "you first showed me the right, and if I have strength to follow it, it is from you that I gain it. My whole life shall be given to redeem my errors in this cause."

"How is it arranged, Chauncey?" said Constance, hoarsely.

"There seems no doubt but that we shall find both men and horses — we may start by daybreak."

"By daybreak," said Constance, almost gasping.

"The sooner the better," said Chauncey, "it is our only chance of coming up with the ruffians."

"By daybreak! what now? Chauncey, oh, must it be?" asked Constance, in agony.

"Yes, it must, Constance, it must be. Oh, you alone, sweet one," he said, as she hid her face on his shoulder, "you alone know why it is a sacred necessity for me to rescue that poor girl. I must go; but, my darling, you must not fear the worst. There is no need. I run no more risk than any of these brave fellows who are going with me, and the chances are ten to one there will be no fighting at all, and that she will be surrendered to my claim. You will see us back again in a few days."

Constance glanced at the covered figures lying near her, and a shiver of terror passed over her. "But if they have already passed the border, what will you do? These men cannot go on with you."

"If so, I must go on alone, but then there can be no danger; I shall go as a Southern man, and claim my own property. My hope, my trust, is that they

may place her in jail, to wait for a claimant — perhaps they will send and let Mavor know she is taken. My fear is that they may ride southward in Kansas, not intending to give her up, and that we shall have to pursue, and fight for her. If it is so — but no, there is no great danger," said Chauncey quickly, and then he added, as he could not disguise the risk from her, "It may be useless, Constance, it may be no good, but I must go; but for me she would never have been in their power. Oh! darling, my darling wife," he added, as he saw the agony struggling in her face, "don't wish to keep me back — it is my expiation; all I can do is but nothing — it will take a lifetime to redeem my fault. If you knew the slavery to which this poor girl has gone, you would not want me to stay here one moment, while there is a chance of saving her."

"Oh, I do not want you to stay, Chauncey," said Constance, resolutely, and struggling for calmness. "If I did not know you would go whether I am weak or not, I would hide all this from you. She must be rescued, and only you can do it, I know."

"Only I can do it," replied Chauncey. "Fighting will not rescue her if she is in Missouri, but they cannot dispute my claim. There is no one else to save her, if I do not, and if there were, it is for me to do it before any other man. It was I sent her to this; but do not fear, my own angel. God bless you, Constance; you have indeed been my good angel always, and if——"

He could say no more, he felt his own voice falter, and he saw she could hear no further; he pressed her to his heart in silence, and then, as if trying to forget their own agitation in the sense of action, they joined the others, who were busied in preparing for the journey. Fresh ammunition, water-flasks, and well-packed wallets of provisions had to be got ready, and blankets and cloaks found for the travellers, for it was growing colder every hour, and Dr. Seaward announced that it was already beginning to snow.

These preparations took a long time, and several hours passed while they were still at work. The snow was already thick on the ground before Foster returned, bringing with him both men and horses. They had come from a house about seven miles

off, but they only needed a short rest, and as the sun rose all was ready. Dr. Seaward, and those of the settlers who did not purpose accompanying the expedition, now brought the horses to the door, and the party set out, Foster taking the head of the little company, with Annersly riding next him. Chauncey had mounted one of the first, but as Foster rode off, he threw himself from his horse, and returned for one more farewell word to Constance. She had parted from him calmly and courageously, but as she saw him leave the door her firmness deserted her, and he found her with her face buried in her hands, in agony.

"You have come back," she said, looking up as he kissed her. "You are not gone!" and a ray of hope flashed across her mind. "Have you had news? Is she found? You need not go."

"Oh, no; we must go; but Constance, loved one, why fear the worst? There will be no fighting, and if there should be a skirmish, we have seen what cowards these wretches are; we shall probably decide the matter with a few shots. Give me one kiss, my darling, I must be gone."

Constance threw her arms round his neck, and hid her face on his shoulder. "Give me your blessing, darling. Tell me you approve my going as the expiation ——"

She kissed him in silence, she could not speak; again she kissed him, and in a few moments he was riding after his companions.

The party consisted of seven men after Chauncey joined it. Foster, during the early hours of the night, had ridden to another farm-house, to find the brother of the man whom the marauders had killed when they carried away Irene. Overcome with grief, and thirsting for vengeance, Jesse Whatman was eager to form one of the expedition, and he was accompanied by two men who, crossing that part of the territory, had stopped for the night at his house. After riding for a couple of hours, the cavalcade reached a small river, the andmark that Foster had chosen as a rendezvous far Asa. He was there waiting, and three others with him, all ready to follow and have a skirmish with the enemy who had invaded their territory and murdered their companions. Charles welcomed the sight of the led horse, furnished with

the side-saddle, as an omen of success, and taking the rein, declared he would be the one to lead the animal during the journey.

"Very good," said Foster, "but you all mind this now. We aren't come to fight the pro-slave men, but to get off the girl; we may have to fight them, and if we have, there ain't none of us will shrink, but if we can do it peaceably, we had better, for fear she should be hurt, or be got off while we are fighting. I know, Mr. Whatman, you want to take vengeance on the wretches for the murder they've done last night, and I don't know but that you're right, but I'd rather the man as shot my friend or my brother was not killed by me, so as he was killed. But, however, what we've now in hand is to get the girl back, if she's still in the territory."

"And if she is over the border, I have little doubt of being able to rescue her, as I told you," said Chauncey.

"I'm afraid, if she's in Missouri, she's gone for good," replied one of the strangers who had joined them.

"Unless there are any good riders who will follow me there," said Chauncey.

Foster shook his head as he answered:

"He must have pretty well made up his mind never to come back again who does follow you, I guess! I don't suppose you'll get any one to follow you there."

"There are some who ain't afraid neither," said the former speaker. Chauncey turned eagerly to him. "Haven't you heard," he continued, "what the captain — what old Brown and his boys were doing last week? They don't mind the pro-slave man in this country, or over the border. There was a poor nigger fellow came last Sunday evening, and told old Brown he was going to be sold, he and his children and his wife, if he couldn't help him, and the captain said he would help him; and he went the next morning over the border and brought back the negro and his family, and half a dozen more slaves — brought them safe back into this territory, and made free men of 'em. That's what I call the right way to punish these Missourians for coming among us and shooting our men down, but there ain't many like old Brown."

The stranger saw sympathy in Chauncey's flashing eye, and would have gone on, but the Englishman interrupted him.

"But is not this an aggression on the rights of another state?" he said.

"Aggression, sir! and what would you call their coming over, four, six, twenty hundred strong, as they've done, burning our houses and our stacks, and carrying off our cattle? Haven't we a right to carry off their slaves, if we can do it? It will teach them too that we can invade another state if we think fit, and perhaps make them leave us alone for the future. Eleven slaves, the captain says, it's the very number as the men whom those wretches shot eight months back. Did you know of that, sir? These rascals came up upon our men who were working in the fields, and took eleven of them, ranged them side by side, and shot them there."

"I have heard of it; it is horrible," said the Englishman. "And do the authorities—?"

"Oh, the authorities here are the pro-slave men," said the other, interrupting him. "And our own men who are in power are too cowardly to do anything; they keep talking peace, peace. How can we have moderation when these fellows come at any moment to surround our cabins and fire

into us when we are asleep,—when they come swearing and drinking to shoot us at our work, and to ill-treat our women? Ah! you don't half know what goes on in this territory. You say *we* are disturbers; your newspapers call us and our captains robbers, because we take up arms in our own defence. You haven't seen the United States soldiers dressed in plain clothes like the Missourians, helping them to plunder our towns. You don't know what these border ruffians will do. They caught a poor fellow once, a foreigner*, who had helped us—a brave lad he was too—and told him he might run as fast as he could, and see if he could escape being hit by them. He wouldn't run, poor fellow! He turned and looked full at them, and they fired together into him. I've known, sir, a boy bound hand and foot, having his mouth stopped with a revolver handle thrust into it and tied there, and so kept to starve till he died in the fields, by them pro-slave robbers. No thanks to them if an Indian found him still alive and brought him home—an Indian, sir! Well, I've seen more than that

* This was an Hungarian who joined Captain Brown.

—but where are we going? Not for Missouri," he observed, as Foster, after consulting with Asa for a moment, led the way to the right of a little pool, where the road separated into two directions.

"The rogues haven't gone to the border; I can't make out why not, but they ain't," said Foster; and Asa added:

"Maybe they're looking to join another lot of 'em a piece ahead; and if so, it's a bad look-out for us."

"Never mind; if they feel stronger, they won't hurry, and we may come up with them; and Mr. Burgoyne must manage the business—maybe with money," said Foster. "Let's on quicker, for it's going to come snow again, and we shan't see their trail."

"No fear of that," observed Asa; "if they've gone on as they've begun, we shall hear of 'em everywhere."

It proved as Asa suggested; the Missourians, or rather the South Carolina and Georgia men, as he insisted on it the enemy were, had not been able to resist firing one or two cottages from which the occupants had retired on their approach, and their progress was well marked across the country by these evidences. Foster declared his

belief that they were retiring but slowly, and that his party was now gaining on them.

"They have had a long start of us, you see," he said; "but they must rest their cattle by day if they ride all night. If we could find fresh horses we should be up with them by the morning; but as it is we must even now stop our beasts if we mean to get on much further to-night, and I don't want to camp out on the prairie if I can help it."

This observation was re-echoed by several of the company. The travellers had brought cloaks and blankets with them in the event of their being obliged to pass the night in the open air; but this the extreme cold rendered unadvisable if it were possible to avoid it, and they urged on their tired horses long after the short winter's day had grown dark, in hopes of finding a cabin to shelter in. They were favoured by fortune in reaching a farm-house, of which the inmates had, like themselves the preceding evening, successfully resisted an attack of the Missourians that day. Several of the men, seeing their numbers reinforced by the unlooked for arrival of friends, prepared

to accompany the pursuers and chastise the marauders. This addition swelled the force of Foster to fifteen men; and he confidently said he had no fear of encountering two dozen of the enemy.

"Two dozen, I rather guess not," cried one of his followers, the man who had held so long a conversation with Annersly during the ride. "I've seen four hundred men run away from forty, ay, and from thirty men of ours; and I would not be afraid now to meet fifty of the fellows or more."

"Nor would I for a fair fight, if our own rifles were all like yours, Paul," replied Foster; "they say you cannot miss at the half mile. But no rifles will be of much good now; we don't want to drive off the pro-slavery men, which would be easy, but to stop them and take the girl from them; be sure they'll try and make off with her at the very first."

"I did not know the villains had got a lady with them while they were here," said the master of the house, whom the knowledge that a woman had been carried off a prisoner by the Southerners had thrown into the greatest excitement. "One

of my girls told me, after they'd gone, that she saw the wagon at a distance, while they were firing at us, and the lady must have been in it."

"I saw her nearer," said a young man, the farmer's son; "I went down the run to get a better shot at them, and I was not twenty yards from her; if there'd been three of us we might have got her here, but there were eight of the fellows near the wagon, and if I'd have fired at them, I'd have had them all on me in a minute, and no good to her nor to me. If they hadn't taken our horses though, I and some of us would have been on their tracks before now; as we will as soon as we can get fresh beasts from the mill. Poor thing, she was quite handsome and young, but she was as pale as death, and scared out of her wits, I think."

"Ay, she don't look fit to bear much knocking about," said Foster, with a half sigh. "Yes, I guess she was scared."

"I laid my rifle to shoot the man who stood by her — a mean-looking thief he was," said the young borderer. "However, I'll help bring her back. Where have they taken her from, do you know?"

he added, appealing to Foster. "Is she a neighbour of yours?"

"We are not to say she is a fugitive, are we?" said Annersly, in a low voice to Chauncey, but he stopped in surprise as he noticed his friend's intense paleness.

"No, do not; it is as well not," he replied, with difficulty; "we want as many hands as we can get for the fight, and if they believe she is white, so much the better."

"But do we want more assistance? are we not enough as we are?" said Charles, looking at the bold and resolute faces about them.

"No, there is a fear; there is a report that a larger body of the Missourians are near, and they may have joined our chase before we overtake it."

"A bad look-out, indeed," said Charles, with a low whistle; "however, we have but one course to take, and that is to ride on as soon as our horses are rested. How long must we stay here?"

"Several hours, Foster thinks, as our horses are thoroughly beaten, and must rest; by the morning too we shall perhaps have more recruits, not that they would

be worth staying for, if we could get our animals on."

"Well, then, we had better rest and be strong for the fight to-morrow," said Charles, laying himself down, as the others had done, upon the boarded floor in the kitchen, where they had eaten a hasty supper. Anxious and excited as Charles was, the long journey in the cold air had disposed him to sleep, and he lost consciousness almost as soon as his more indifferent companions. Chauncey, worn and weak, imitated their example in lying down to sleep, but not with much success, Charles inferred, as he saw his friend's pale and haggard countenance, in the morning, by the light of the pine torches flaring in the gusty wind. Long before dawn the rescuers were all mounted and on their way, while the stars were still shining.

"We shall have daylight for our skirmish," said Paul, as he drew his horse closer to Chauncey's. "I wouldn't have minded dark though, for that matter. When we went with old Brown to drive the Pukes off from Lawrence, we lay all night in the fields, firing at the enemy; and it was a sharp bitter night like last

night was, and as we shall find it this evening too, if we have to camp it out."

"Were you one there, then?" said Chauncey, not unwilling, perhaps, to have his attention forcibly withdrawn from the painful thoughts now occupying it.

"Yes, I was—there were only thirty-nine of us, and there were four hundred of them, and sixteen hundred more waiting a few miles off to come on us; but old Brown never minds numbers, and we were fighting for our homes and friends against those border ruffians. Captain Brown came along where some of us were lying waiting to see if the enemy would come back that night; he talked some time with us, and told us how these fellows had shot his son. They met him when he was unarmed; he thought they were friends, and they shot him. After he was dead they fired a pistol into his mouth. Old Brown told us this himself—he was near when they shot his son, and could not save him. Well, sir, we drove off the pro-slave fellows, for the boys who are under Captain Brown know they are sure of winning with him; they are but few, but they are enough, for only men who fear God, and who fear no man, are in old Brown's camp."

"Well Paul," said Foster, interrupting him, "you may have to cover our retreat, if we are to lead the girl off. You and Asa, and all the other good shots among us, must keep the Missourians off, while those who have her gallop on. We are close upon them now, I guess."

"Close upon them! Is it possible?" said Annersly, looking round at the desolate prairie, where nothing seemed moving but themselves. Chauncey shook his rein and pressed on faster.

"Don't go ahead, you can do nothing without us, Mr. Burgoyne," said Foster. "No, I couldn't say they were here of myself; but here's a friend who brings us news;" and Annersly, turning round, saw a man among them, talking to Rogers and Asa, who were examining their rifles and their revolvers, as if expecting the enemy.

"You say we are close on them?" asked Chauncey eagerly.

"You're within four miles of their camp," was the reply; "but if you're not quick, you'll not catch them before the others come up."

"The others! what others? Have the party with the lady gone this way?"

"Yes, they have, but they'll be joined in another hour by the men under Rawder—that is under Burgoyne now, and so much the worse, for he's a devil to come on; and has got more pluck than Rawder or Myddleton, or all together.

"Now we are fortunate, if it is so," said Annersly joyfully. "I and you, Chauncey, will be sufficient without bringing our riflemen into requisition. Let us go on, and find him as quickly as may be."

"But no one knows if Captain Burgoyne is there," cried Foster. "Don't run into certain death before we're sure. He left his troop yesterday, they say."

Chauncey was already riding fast onwards, and Foster, finding it impossible to recall either him or Annersly, told his followers to put their horses to a hand gallop, and come up with their too impatient companions as speedily as they could. A deep and wide brook, some six rods across, obstructed their path, but Chauncey's horse, catching something of the desperate haste of his rider, obeyed the spur, and plunged in; Charles followed, but gained the opposite bank with difficulty, and when there, stayed to shout to Foster that the passage was too

dangerous, and that if there was a ford within a short distance, it would be wisest to take it.

Foster had already come to this conclusion while the two young men were crossing the stream, and had led his party a little to the west, where the banks of the river were less steep, and where their new companion told them the water was fordable. After crossing the stream, they found they had lost no time by thus diverging from the straight road, for the tracks of wheels upon the soft mud showed that the wagon had passed there also, and that not an hour before, as Asa remarked on seeing the same marks continuing before them, not yet entirely obliterated by the snow, which had been fast falling till within the last ten minutes.

"I shouldn't wonder but that hill only hides them from us," said Rogers, as Chauncey and Annersly rejoined them. "Now, then, Mr. Burgoyne, what are you going to do?"

"I shall leave you here, and ride on to my brother, to tell him my errand," said Chauncey, promptly, for he saw distrust in Rogers's eye.

"No, indeed, you don't go on alone, at least till we see if he is there," said Foster.

"Come on, all of us, and see what the enemy are about. We are as ready for a fight as need be, Mr. Burgoyne; but we'll help you get back the girl in the way you find best."

The little hill, of which Rogers had spoken, now rose in their front; its sides were sprinkled with a few bushes and trees, and as they reached the top they saw the path stretching below along a broad, open space, closed in by several straggling clumps of timber which formed the outskirts of a thick wood on the eastern side. Some of the brushwood fringed the hill and bordered the road that descended it; but except Foster and those marksmen who looked round to study the advantages of the ground, no eye took notice of the inanimate objects before them, for but a mile in front a large troop of horsemen, numbering more than a hundred men, were pursuing their way at a slow trot southwards. The foremost riders were already disappearing from sight, but the rear-guard and the stragglers were still within rifle shot from the hill.

"They've joined the others," said Foster, in dismay. "Now, what is to be done? Mavor Burgoyne is not amongst them, of

that we are almost certain; so what is to be done?"

"What is to be done is plain," said Chauncey, turning to him, with eyes flashing and lips quivering with excitement. "If my brother is not there, never mind — she is there, and in the rear, thank God! We must be on them, and take her before they are aware. That is what must be done; there is no other way."

He pointed to the little wagon, which, driven only by one man, was following the horsemen at some distance.

"I'll go with you," said Whatman, drawing his revolver. "Let us go; there's not a minute to spare. If they see us, they'll come back round the wagon."

Foster interposed, saying that the present distance between them and the vehicle would breathe their horses too much for them to hope to return to the shelter of their hill in safety. He represented this so forcibly that Chauncey gave way, and rode with the rest of the party at only a quick trot down the hill, until they reached the level of a little ravine. Beyond this the trees broke, and, if they moved further, all concealment must be at an end.

"Now what we have to do is this," said Foster. "There is no time to talk of claims or ransom — they will fire on us as soon as they see us: the thing we have to do is to ride, four or five of us, up to the wagon and get the girl out, and return to this ravine as fast as we can with her. Then, if they will hear reason, we may parley; if not, I guess we can hold this place against them all till they are tired of it, and if they don't know how few we are, they'll run. I wonder they have not heard our horses yet. Now, are you ready?" And putting their horses to their full speed, six or seven of the Free-state men galloped forward towards the wagon, which was following the Missourians at a little distance. Chauncey and Foster left their companions far behind, and reached the vehicle together. The man who drove it turned round in bewildered amazement, uncertain if they were friends or foes, and they were upon him, and had stopped his horses, before he had time to draw his revolver. Irene saw Foster, and sprang up with a cry of hope and joy.

"We only want the girl. Sit still, and you are safe," cried Chauncey, as, levelling

his pistol, he reined in his horse close to the Missourian, who, resistance hopeless, wisely submitted.

"I thought we'd get you safe, child," said Foster, as he lifted Irene from the wagon on to his horse's neck, and, turning, gave the animal the rein; but one or two of the men nearest saw the rescue, and, with loud shouts and cries, rode towards them. Chauncey waited a moment till the driver of the cart had given up his pistols, lest a parting shot from him might undo their work, and then galloped after Foster, pursued by five or six of the Southerners. Annersly, coming on at full gallop, reached Foster leading the horse they had brought with them, and, without dismounting, they placed Irene in the saddle. She recognised the Englishman with an exclamation of surprise, but there was no time for greetings; the Free-soilers turned their horses, and, with Irene in their midst, rode at their utmost speed to the ravine.

"Ride for it, boys! ride for it!" cried Foster, as he heard the report of fire-arms behind them; and, looking back, saw that twenty or thirty of the Southerners were giving chase. Happily for the little

party, the foremost of the enemy carried no rifles, and their pistols fell short of the fugitives. Foster saw Chauncey was close behind him, and also that their immediate pursuers had checked their horses, and were waiting for those further off to come up. Foster tried to keep Irene near him, for she was quite unable to manage her horse; but he was obliged to leave her to the guidance of Rogers, while he pushed forward, even faster than his friends, to choose a fitting cover where they might pause and face the enemy. The hill was still three furlongs distant, and the Southerners were gaining on them every moment.

"God help us! they have rifles — it is over with us!" exclaimed Foster, as a ball grazed the flank of his horse, and the animal sprang forward still faster. Chauncey caught Irene's bridle from Rogers, and, turning to the right, made for the intervening shelter of a corner of the wood.

"Right — good! take her there," cried Foster, while still pressing on to the hill, trying to escape the bullets of their enemy by speed. Their foes were now in full pursuit, and there were not four hundred yards between the two parties, as they

reached the foot of the hill at the entrance of the ravine.

Foster sprang from the saddle and levelled his rifle. "To cover, boys!" he cried, as he fired. His companions dismounted from their horses, which Asa collected and led down the ravine, the borderers taking aim as they sank into their covers. Another rifle ball had struck the tree by which Foster stood.

"Mark him! mark the man with the rifle; he on the white horse," cried Whatman,—"he who is leading them."

"It's Mavor Burgoyne," said Paul; "I've sworn to pay him for poor Miller when I met him, and I will now."

He fired as he spoke; but the aim, which he boasted could not miss at half a mile, was now unsteadied by his haste, and the shot had no effect. The Southerners, however, did not advance, and seemed hesitating whether they should do so. Only a quarter of a mile lay between them and the ravine, and they saw they had good marksmen to contend with.

"Let us charge the rebels," cried the impetuous Mavor, who had joined the troop but ten minutes before. "Bring it hand

to hand, like men. Here they have us at a disadvantage."

His friends hesitated. Had his bold counsels been followed, the Kansas men might have been overpowered in a few moments, before they could have reloaded their rifles. But their every shot was likely to find a victim; and the rest of the Southerners lacked Mavor's reckless daring. Their other officers proposed to fall back out of reach of the far-carrying rifles, and deliberate upon the best manner of proceeding at a safe distance. Mavor swore impatiently.

"Yes, you will wait for reinforcements till the rebels have escaped. Come on boldly; they can only fire once, and we shall be on them."

Myddleton shook his head—a rifle ball pierced his hat, and determined his irresolution.

"Back, boys, back to the wood, and rally there," he cried, and putting spurs to his horse, he hastened towards the shelter. Mavor followed, but his horse fell under him, struck by another bullet. The Southerners quickened their pace, nor drew in until they found themselves protected by

the trees, and the distance of nearly a mile from their enemies. Mavor, unhorsed and helpless, owed his life to the chivalry of the Free-soilers. Foster forbade his followers to fire at the man on foot, and the Carolinian was permitted to rejoin his friends. Several shots were fired by the marksmen at the thicket which hid their foes from them, but their captain prohibited any more waste of powder.

"They are too far for us to aim, and we have but a chance to hit amongst those trees. Now we've time, let us be off, boys, and get a few miles between us and them. We have the girl safe, and that's what we've come for. Where is she, and where is Mr. Burgoyne?—he has got her."

"Yes, and gone off all safe to the right," answered Asa. "I saw them pass the wood, and I made signs to him to make tracks north. I reckon they're a piece ahead by now, if they have crossed the brook. There's a ford out that way; but the one we came will serve us, I guess."

"Come on, then," said Foster; and the little company mounted, and in a few moments left the hill between them and their enemies. They rode with good speed to

the northward, and, to their joyful surprise, saw they were not pursued.

"Do you see Mr. Burgoyne and the girl yet?" asked Asa of Annersly, as they rode on at a fast but steady pace. "They're over the brook, I reckon, and yet I wonder how he got her over; she can't ride much. I didn't expect to see her so white. I shouldn't expect she is a coloured woman at all."

"Well, I don't see 'em on ahead," said Foster, "so we had best push on as fast as we can, and catch them."

Chauncey was not, as the Free-soilers imagined, before them. He had succeeded in gaining the wood, which protected him and Irene from the rifle-bullets of the pursuers, and from thence he saw his companions reach the ravine, and face the enemy. It was impossible for him to join them, and Asa made gesticulations to him to proceed northward. Chauncey went on, therefore, but soon found the river obstructing the path. To attempt to cross it, as he had done before, was now impossible with Irene, and turning to the right, he sought the second ford, which he had learned was further down the river. The

wood was still between him and the enemy, but, unhappily, others had sought its shelter likewise, and as he reached the ford, he saw three or four horsemen riding towards them from the trees. They had no rifles, but came galloping on with shouts of triumph as they caught sight of the fugitives.

Chauncey seized Irene's bridle, and tried to force the horse into the stream, but the bank was steep, and the animal refused to descend. It plunged and reared, and finally stood stock still at the water's edge. Their enemies were upon them, and a pistol ball whizzed close to them. There was no possibility of escape, and Chauncey rode towards the Southerners, revolver in hand. They drew in their horses, unwilling to come to a last struggle with so desperate an opponent.

"Surrender, and you are safe," cried one. "If not, we will blow you through at once. You cannot escape. Surrender."*

* This man was afterwards taken prisoner by Foster, after attempting to kidnap and carry off a free-coloured man living in Kansas. The Missourian was severely wounded, and remained for some time an inmate of Foster's cabin, till he was sufficiently recovered to return home, which he was allowed to do

"Are our lives safe if I do, and will you take us at once to your captain?" Chauncey asked, still levelling his revolver.

"Yes, if you surrender, and if not we'll shoot you and the woman both," answered the other, and Chauncey, lowering his pistol, rode up amongst them, and was immediately disarmed.

"Come on with him, we have no time to lose," said the chief of the party; and putting their horses to a fast trot, they had soon led the prisoners another mile further from the river. Chauncey tried to soothe Irene's terror by the hope that they should find his brother, who would, if he did not release them, at least protect them from present injury; and, addressing himself to his captor, he told him he was a Southern man, the brother of Captain Burgoyne, and that he claimed Irene as his own property, wrongfully carried off from Kansas against his desire.

The other heard him in grim silence, and made no reply; but as three or four more horsemen came hurrying towards them, he said—

on a promise to abstain from similar offences in future.

"If you are a Southerner, why are you amongst the rebels, unless you are a traitor? Here are those who will try you, and see what you deserve."

"Here, we've caught one of the cursed rebels, and the girl too!"

"Well done!" cried the new comers. "Cut his throat—why don't you pistol him?"

"I have surrendered under a promise of seeing your captain immediately," said Chauncey, raising his voice so that all could hear.

"He says he is a Southern man," cried the Missourian who had received the prisoner's surrender; but his voice, as well as Chauncey's, was drowned amidst the storm of voices.

"A Southern man? A cursed Free-soiler! Hang the traitor! No quarter to rebels! He swings—doesn't he, boys?"

"Ay, ay, he swings—choke him—Southern rights to all—death to all abolitionists—tear his heart out," shouted the Southerners, and Chauncey was unheard and unheeded when he demanded a fair trial and permission to see his brother.

"Quick!—dismount him!—choke him!—give no quarter. Haven't you a noose?"

cried the leader of the new comers, in a voice louder than the shouts of his companions.

"This will do as well," said another, raising his revolver; "or this," shouted a second, as he aimed a blow at the prisoner with a wood-axe which hung at his saddle. Chauncey saw the movement, and checked his horse suddenly; it reared high, and, the blow missing his head, fell heavily on his right arm, which dropped powerless to his side. "Down with him, off with him," cried the leader; and Chauncey was pulled from his horse in a moment, and immediately stunned by a blow on the forehead. "Make haste, boys, here come the Missourians to cheat us of the honour of killing the d——d nigger thief." Irene had sprung from the saddle, and grasped frantically at the arm of the man nearest Chauncey. "He is a Southerner, he is, indeed! he's Mr. Burgoyne—brother to your captain—I will go with you, spare him, spare him!" Her words were stifled; a Southerner caught her up, and, stopping her mouth, dragged her away. Her wild shriek had recalled Chauncey's faculties—he reeled giddily towards her—he saw her being carried off at a quick pace southwards—he seized with

his left hand one of the foremost of his assailants, and they fell together. Chauncey struggled again to his feet, but it was only to receive the contents of a pistol in his breast; there was no need of further violence, but another pistol was fired at him as he lay on the ground. One man stooped over him to take better aim, but it was not wanted — the lips indeed quivered; it seemed as if he uttered some name, and then the voice of the young Carolinian was stilled for ever.

Another troop of horsemen cantered quickly towards them — and Mavor Burgoyne rode up to the scene of his brother's death.

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Three months later Charles was urging Constance to return with him to England.

"No, Charles," she said. "No, I will remain in America. My love has been given to an American—in his country I will remain, as long, at least, as is necessary to fulfil the last wish of which he was conscious—I will wait here until Irene can be heard of. I will not despair yet. I have

work yet, *his* work, to finish. God grant me strength to go through with it!"

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Nearly three years have gone by since then, but Chauncey's work is yet unfinished—Constance is yet in America. A report reached her some months since that a young girl, answering in many respects to the description of Irene, had been sold at an auction in Mobile in Alabama, along with some other slaves, but nothing really authentic is known. It may be that death has already removed the bonds of the young American girl; it may be that she still lives, degraded, broken-hearted, looking for the rescue which is long in coming. We know not. The "South" wars with the "North," the "North" wars with the "South," but the banner of Freedom is not yet unfurled. Union, not Emancipation, is the watchword. America has yet to learn the sublime truth—"God has made of one blood all nations of men."

THE END.

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